

PENGUIN
SPECIALS

THE SILVER WAY



PETER GORDON
JUAN JOSÉ MORALES



Penguin Specials

‘We believed in the existence in this country of a vast reading public for intelligent books at a low price, and staked everything on it’

Sir Allen Lane, founder of Penguin Books.

The first affordable quality books for a mass audience were brought out by Penguin nearly eighty years ago. And while much has changed since then, the way we read books is only now becoming different. Sometimes it is still only a hardback or paperback book that will do. But at other times we prefer to read on something either more portable – a dedicated reading device or our smart mobile phone – or more connected, such as a tablet or a computer.

Where we are or how much time we have often decides what it is we will read next.

Penguin Specials are designed to fill a gap. They are short, they are original and affordable, and they are written by some of today’s best and most exciting writers.

Written to be read over a long commute or a short journey, in your lunch hour or between dinner and bedtime, these brief books provide a short escape into a fictional world or act as a primer in a particular field or provide a new angle on an old subject.

Always informative and entertaining, Penguin Specials offer excellent writing that you can read on the move or in a spare moment for less than the price of a cup of coffee.

The Silver Way

China, Spanish America and
the Birth of Globalisation,
1565–1815

PETER GORDON

JUAN JOSÉ
MORALES



CONTENTS

A Note on Names

Prologue

I A Renaissance Space Race

II The First Transoceanic Shipping Line

III The Emergence of the Global Economy

IV The First World City

V A Global Currency

VI The Birth of Globalisation

VII Ruta Redux

Conclusion

Timeline

Notes

Bibliography

Illustrations

Acknowledgements

A Note on Names

The kings of Spain and navigators are referred to by the names to which they are most commonly referred to in English, e.g. Charles and Philip rather than Carlos and Felipe, Columbus rather than Colón, Magellan rather than Magallanes or Magalhães. When spellings differ, e.g. Legaspi and Legazpi, we have chosen the one in more common contemporary use.

The term ‘Spanish America’ is used to refer those parts of the Americas under Spanish rule during the period in question, roughly the sixteenth century through the first one or two decades of the nineteenth century.

The majority of the diverse primary Spanish and Filipino sources are given in translation in the magisterial fifty-five-volume set *The Philippine Islands, 1493–1898*, edited and annotated by Emma Helen Blair and James Alexander Robertson, published by the A.H. Clark Company starting in 1903. Almost all of these have been digitised and are available online at www.gutenberg.org and elsewhere. These volumes, or rather the translations, have a small number of idiosyncrasies, such as the use of ‘España’ for Spain and certain ethnic terms that have since fallen out of favour. These have been updated here.

Prologue

Andrés de Urdaneta is a name that few other than specialist historians will immediately recognise. He was one of the last of the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century explorers and navigators from the Iberian peninsula whose voyages resulted in redrawing the globe in more or less the form we know it today. Christopher Columbus has a country and several cities named after him; Ferdinand Magellan has the famous straits. But Urdaneta has no such monuments.

Perhaps this is because Urdaneta didn't discover how to get anywhere, but rather less glamorously but no less importantly discovered how to get *back*. Until 1565, no fleet had succeeded in sailing east from Asia back across the Pacific to the Americas. It was Urdaneta, a survivor of earlier expeditions, who first worked out the right winds and currents across the uncharted waters of this vast ocean. His discovery was called the *tornaviaje*, or 'return trip'.

The importance of this achievement was well understood at the time: the King of Spain had made it an explicit objective of the voyage, and Urdaneta's arrival in Mexico was cause for public celebration. A letter of the time said that 'those of Mexico are mighty proud of their discovery, which gives them to believe that they will be the center of the world.'¹ They were, as we shall see, arguably correct in this belief.

The trading route that resulted from Urdaneta's discovery – that of the Manila galleons – brought the silver from the Americas that underpinned China's money supply and transformed the global economy. This Ruta de la Plata – or 'Silver Way' – characterised a period when commerce between China and Spanish America formed the lynchpin of trade routes spanning four continents. It also marked the first time the entire world had been knitted together with the global trade and financial networks that form the basis of our modern globalised world and ushered in the global economy that remains with us today.

Urdaneta's discovery and its lasting significance seem largely forgotten, at least in the English-speaking world, among the dustier shelves of the historical record. Yet today's tightly-linked, globalised

world derives its origins not so much from the Industrial Revolution as from this earlier period. The pivotal role of Spanish America and China in these previous 250 years of global integration has been obscured and superseded by the prevailing narrative of Anglo-American predominance in everything from the economy to technology to military power.

Yet China is an increasingly square peg in this round narrative hole. China is, however, more easily accommodated by moving the start of the narrative back by two centuries to a period before New York and London were financial capitals – to, indeed, a period before the United States even existed.

I

A Renaissance Space Race

‘History is written by the winners.’

– George Orwell, *As I Please*

4 February 1944¹

For a period of twelve years starting in 1957 with the launch of Sputnik, the United States and the USSR engaged in a competition for prestige and new expanses whose military and commercial potential was as yet mere speculation. The United States ‘won’ this space race, landing men on the moon in 1969. Sputnik was a wake-up call, but America’s dominance in space has meant that John Glenn, Neil Armstrong and Sally Ride are household names, and not just in the United States. Meanwhile, with the possible exception of Yuri Gagarin cosmonauts such as Alexey Leonov are largely recognised only by Russians and specialists.

By the late fifteenth century, Spanish and Portuguese rulers had been jostling each other for years. Just as the United States and the Soviet Union united against Germany in the Second World War, these two strategic competitors had a common enemy – in their case, the Muslims who had ruled much of the Iberian peninsula since the eighth century. The strategic competition between Spain and Portugal intensified once the Muslim threat receded and Spain was unified under a single crown.

Portugal had by then been inching down the coast of Africa for several decades, something that didn’t much matter if Africa, as some suspected, went on forever southwards. Spain’s ‘Sputnik moment’ came in 1488 when the Portuguese explorer Bartolomeu Dias sailed around the Cape of Good Hope at Africa’s southern tip, making his the first European ship to enter the Indian Ocean and thereby open a clear route to the silks and spices of the East.

Asian spices – in particular pepper, but also cloves, nutmeg and others – had driven international trade for millennia. Literally worth more than their weight in gold, no cargo packed more value into as little space. Individual peppercorns could be used as currency. The

spice routes from Asia to Europe had long been controlled by Muslim powers. They were subject to disruption, while European powers and merchants were also denied the profits that would accrue from direct access to the sources.

Dias's discovery was very much on the minds of Spain's 'Catholic Monarchs' Ferdinand and Isabella when they famously agreed to finance Christopher Columbus's 1492 voyage to reach Asia by sailing west. Columbus of course ran into a new continent, while Vasco da Gama made it to India by 1498. Just a decade later, the Portuguese had established themselves in Southeast Asia and made direct contact with China in 1513, the same year the Spanish explorer Vasco Núñez de Balboa first set eyes on the Pacific Ocean and Ponce de León set foot in Florida. The Americas ended up presenting Spain with opportunities beyond measure, but Spain didn't know that yet – the defeat of the Aztecs and the conquest of Mexico still lay a few years in the future. The Portuguese were trading in China while the Spanish had hardly ventured beyond the Caribbean.

When Columbus died in 1506, it must have been less than evident that it would be his name, rather than Dias's or da Gama's, that would adorn a country, an American holiday, many cities and several universities. Both Dias and da Gama at least had some idea where they were going and where they were once they got there; it is unclear whether Columbus ever realised he had not made it to Asia. And it was Portugal, not Spain, that ruled such transcontinental commerce as there was.

But of course, Spain did conquer both the Aztecs and the Incas, establishing vicerealties based around Mexico (known as Nueva España or New Spain) and Peru, and acquiring in the process an empire the size and wealth of which the world had never seen.

Columbus was followed by Vasco Núñez de Balboa, the first European to set sight on the Pacific Ocean; the Conquistadors Hernán Cortés and Francisco Pizarro; and then Ferdinand Magellan, who was ironically Portuguese and whose expedition was the first to circumnavigate the globe, even if Magellan himself didn't make it, having been laid low during an altercation in the Philippines.

Few English speakers could name Magellan's successors, García Jofre de Loaísa, who made the second crossing of the Pacific in 1526 or Ruy López de Villalobos, who named the Philippines in the 1540s. The next explorer who comes up in the conventional narrative is the Englishman Sir Francis Drake, who circumnavigated the globe between 1577 and 1580 before defeating the Spanish Armada in 1588. While a hero to the English, the Spaniards considered Drake a pirate. But once Drake enters the narrative, Anglo-American protagonists tend to dominate.

+
El Rey

Otra cedula asy
m dñs de vr

Urdaneta

Devoto Padre fray andrés de Urdaneta de la orden de sant agus-
tin yofiesido ynfornado, que Vos siendo seplor, finstid en el
harmado de lo aisa y para estas estrecho como para llores y alla
Specerio donde estovistes, ocho as, en mis seruios y porq
hacia nos haviemos en carpado, adoncia se Velasco mis Viso
rey de españa en persona q embia dos nauis al descubrimien-
to, de las islas del poniente hacia los malucos, y es de
n lo que han de hacer, conforme a la institucion, que se le ha
ymbiado y para que segun, la mucha noticia que di qualencis
de las cosas de aquella tierra y entender, como en entis bien
la nauigacion de ella y ser buenos moxos de ser iacapan
efecto, que Vos que pides en los, dho nauis asi para lo que
toca al dho nauigacion, como para el seruios de dñs mis
senos y mis y yo para el cargo que vos en los
dho nauis y para, lo que por dho Visorey, as fure
ordenado, que de mas del seruios q harias a mis senos y yo
serenmy seruido, y mandare tener cuenta con ello, pa-
ra que Rescatis mis den los ouerelupar de Vallid et
Vente y quatro de setiembre de quinquenta y nueve
as y yo El Rey Respondida de el aso, Senalada de Viraces
ca, don Juan Valdequor, apud Saraua

Letter from Philip II to Andrés de Urdaneta. Note 'El Rey' (the King) at top, and the salutation
'Devoto Padre fray andrés de Urdaneta'

The expedition was to be led by Urdaneta's friend and relative,
Miguel López de Legazpi.



First page of the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494, Portuguese version)

The similarities between what has become known as the ‘age of discovery’ and the ‘space age’ are more than rhetorical. Transoceanic voyages could take years to plan and months if not years to undertake. Missing a departure window could delay a voyage by a year. Should something go wrong, rescue missions were unlikely. Many voyages were, like some proposed Mars missions, one-way. Communications were tenuous.

The planning for Urdaneta's voyage took several years, and the fleet did not depart Puerto de la Navidad on Mexico's west coast until November 1564. The voyage took place under the shadow of what seems today like the most bizarre of legal disputes. Spain and Portugal had been squabbling for years about who had the right to sail and trade where, so in 1494 they decided – after some meddling by the Borgia Pope Alexander VI – to divide the world between them in the Treaty of Tordesillas. A line was drawn 370 leagues west of the Portuguese-controlled Cape Verde Islands. Everything east of the line, at about 46° 37'W, went to Portugal. Everything, that is, except Europe since lands with 'Christian kings' were exempt. This gave Portugal all of Asia and the part of what is now Brazil that sticks out into the Atlantic. Meanwhile, everything west of the line went to Spain, granting them most of what came to be called, a few years later, the Americas. And that was that.

Or at least it was until the Portuguese discovered the Moluccas, part of the Spice Islands. The Spice Islands, so named because they were at the time the sole source of nutmeg, mace and cloves, were also coveted by the Spanish, who knew they could reach them by continuing to sail west to Asia – hence the purpose of the Magellan expedition. Spain argued that the line went all around the globe; Portugal argued that it didn't. But since Emperor Charles V had wars to fight and had as yet no way of getting any spices back to Europe, Spain signed away the islands for 350 000 gold ducats. An anti-meridian was drawn 297.5 leagues east of the Moluccas in the 1529 Treaty of Zaragoza. Urdaneta was, ironically, stranded in the Moluccas when they were sold out from under him.

Both the Spanish and the Portuguese crowns found it convenient and advantageous to follow and enforce the treaties as far as was practicable in their respective areas of influence. The Philippines, as Urdaneta pointed out in a letter to the king, were indisputably on the Portuguese side of the line. Urdaneta departed under the impression that they were heading for New Guinea, as the detailed orders were kept under seal until the expedition was well out to sea. When opened, the destination proved to be the Philippines – Philip, presumably, felt that the Portuguese would not in practice be able to intervene – and so it was to the Philippines they went, landing in February 1565.

Over the next few years, Legazpi secured the Philippines for Spain, founded Manila and became the new territory's first governor. But Urdaneta's mission was to attempt to return as soon as possible: Philip II had originally instructed, '[they were not to] delay themselves with any trading or rescues, but to immediately return to New Spain, because the principal objective of the journey is to learn the return

route, since we already know that the outward voyage is completed in a short time.’³ Legazpi’s eighteen-year-old grandson, Felipe de Salcedo, was placed in charge of the expedition’s lead ship, the *San Pedro*, with Urdaneta plotting the route, and set out in a few weeks.

All previous attempts to sail back across the Pacific had failed. This one succeeded by sailing far north to almost 40°N, rather than trying to duplicate the southern route where the western-blowing trade winds had foiled previous navigators. The ship arrived in Acapulco in October, having covered more than 13 000 kilometres in 130 days. The *tornaviaje*, or ‘return trip’, had been accomplished and, more importantly, painstakingly documented by Urdaneta and his deputies, Esteban Rodríguez and Rodrigo Espinosa.

Even at the time, no one was in any doubt about the significance of the achievement. Indeed, Urdaneta was beaten back to New Spain by another ship, captained by Alonso de Arellano, that had arrived two months earlier. Exactly what transpired was and remains unclear, including whether or not Arellano was aware of Urdaneta’s plan. Arellano had somehow – and under suspicious circumstances – become separated from Urdaneta’s fleet only ten days after the fleet’s departure from Mexico and just five days after the true destination had been disclosed at sea to the fleet. Once he had worked his way back, he claimed credit for discovering the *tornaviaje*. But while this claim was being considered by authorities in New Spain, Urdaneta in turn arrived, with the charts and documentation that in the end secured for him the accolades of both his contemporaries and later historians.

For the first time, European ships could reliably sail the Pacific in both directions. The Polynesians had of course already been covering much of the Pacific for centuries. In our current era of engine-powered ships, to say nothing of aircraft, it can be hard to grasp the notion that travel might be at the mercy of prevailing winds and tides. But up until the advent of steam, one couldn’t sail if the wind and sea didn’t cooperate, and in much of the ocean, they only cooperated in one direction and at one time of the year.

‘Urdaneta’s route’, as it was soon known, immediately became the basis for the annual deployment of trade vessels known as the *Galeón de Manila*, or Manila galleons, that sailed the Acapulco–Manila route for the next 250 years. That these were also known as the *nao de China*, or ‘China ship’, indicates their actual purpose.

Neither Urdaneta nor Legazpi lived long after their respective achievements. Urdaneta died in 1568 in Mexico, while Legazpi died in 1572, only a year after founding Manila. Legazpi left behind a new colony, but one that was itself subordinate to yet another: that of New Spain, based in Mexico. The affairs of a Southeast Asian territory were

thus run from Mexico City: the Philippines were seen and treated as the westernmost part of the Americas.

The colony's only real justification was to act as a hub for the Asia, and particularly China, trade. Legazpi reported back to Spain that, 'We are at the gate and in the vicinity of the most fortunate countries of the world, and the most remote; it is three hundred leagues or thereabouts farther than great China, Brunei, Java, Lauzon, Samatra, Maluco, Malaca, Patan, Sian, Lequios, Japan, and other rich and large provinces . . .'⁴ Neither Legazpi nor Urdaneta are much remembered outside of specific and specialist histories. Legazpi, the erstwhile governor, has a city named after him, the eponymous Legazpi City, capital of Albay province, located at the base of Mayon volcano and carrying the sobriquet 'City of fun and adventure'. Urdaneta City in Pangasinan, actually a town of 120 000, only dates from the mid-nineteenth century but sports a large, modern monument to Urdaneta in front of the city hall.

*

And what happened to the other party in this Renaissance space race? The Portuguese had never been much interested in the Philippines since the islands seemed to offer nothing of value. Legazpi wrote in a letter in 1569 that 'if his Majesty has an eye only on the Felipina islands, they ought to be considered of little importance, because at present the only article of profit which we can get from this land is cinnamon.'⁵ However, the Portuguese were discomfited by the Spaniards being there, and caused such trouble and disruption as they could. Manila complained in 1573 that, 'Last year Chinese vessels came to this city to trade and told us how the Portuguese have asked them not to trade with us, because we were robbers and came to steal and commit other depredations, so that these people wonder not a little if this be true.'⁶

But the crowns of Spain and Portugal were united in 1580, and by the time Portugal regained its independence in 1640, the Portuguese had been largely supplanted in East Asia by the Dutch. Spain emerged, at least for a while, as '*el imperio en el que nunca se pone el sol*', the empire on which the sun never sets, an empire held together in no small part by the world's first transoceanic shipping lines.

II

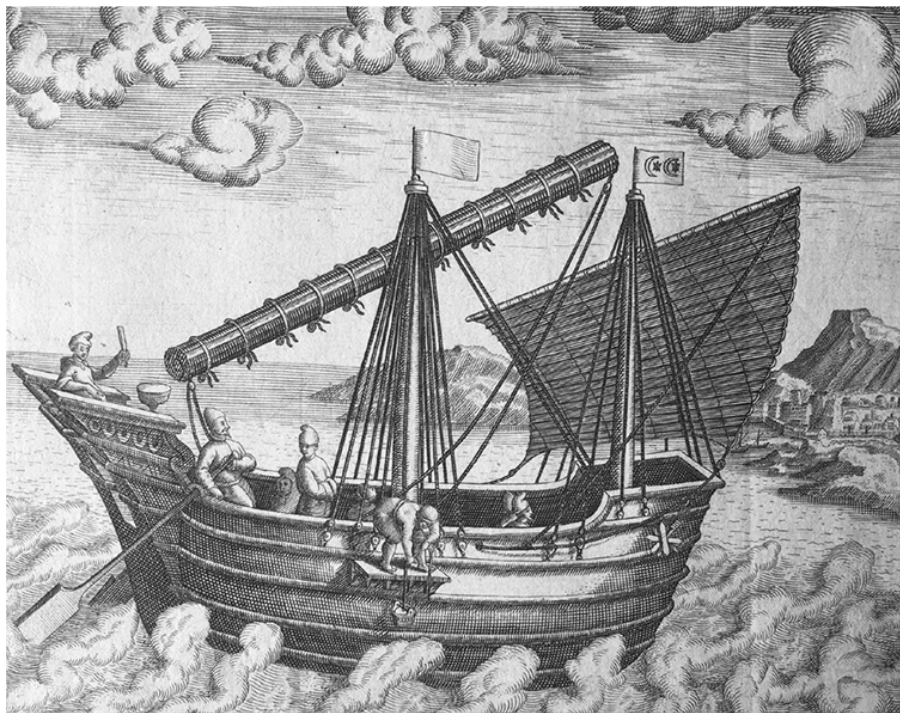
The First Transoceanic Shipping Line

‘The profits from the China trade have grown so much, this commerce has so grown, that it has diminished that in my own realms . . .’

– Philip II, 11 January 1593¹

Urdaneta’s discovery, writes historian Manel Ollé, ‘fixed the route of the oldest and most durable shipping line ever established in continuous operation’.² The commercial rationale for the project was remembered even on this first voyage, which transported back a small amount of cinnamon – not the most valuable of spices, but a symbolic statement of intent.

Legazpi was however still getting settled. After a few years in Cebu, he moved north to Manila for the better location and harbour. ‘We shall gain the commerce with China,’ Legazpi wrote as early as 1569, ‘whence come silks, porcelains, benzoin, musk, and other articles.’³ It was not until 1573 that the first galleons left Manila with Chinese trade goods, most notably including a sizeable shipment of silk.



Theodore de Bry 'Navigational vessel of China' (from Latin edition of *Les Grands Voyages*, Frankfurt, 1602), one of the earliest Western depictions of a junk

Trade soon took off: the venerable Filipino historian Benito Legarda, Jr. counted three junks that visited Manila in 1572, six in 1574 and at least a dozen in 1575. By 1580, forty to fifty junks were arriving each year, mainly if not exclusively from the southern province of Fujian. Manila, for its part, was established as a pre-eminent entrepôt, perfectly positioned for collecting silk from China and Japan, the produce of the Spice Islands to its south and even Indian cotton and Southeast Asian ivory, all for shipment across the Pacific to fill what appeared to be limitless and insatiable demand.⁴

SUCESOS DE LAS ISLAS FILIPINAS.

DIRIGIDO.

A DON CRISTOVAL GOMEZ DE
Sandoual y Rojas, Duque de Cea.

POR EL DOCTOR ANTONIO DE MORGÁ,
*Alcalde del Crimen, de la real Audiencia de la Nueva Es-
paña, Consultor del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición.*



EN MEXICO.

En casa de Geronymo Balli. Año 1609.

Por Cornelio Adriano Cesar.

Frontispiece of *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* (*Events of the Philippine Islands*) by Antonio de Morga (printed in Mexico, 1609)

The wealth and breadth of the goods on offer from the Chinese were described by lawyer Antonio de Morga in 1609:

The merchandise that they generally bring and sell to the Spaniards consists of raw silk, . . . fine untwisted silk, white and of all colors; quantities of velvets, some plain,

and some embroidered in all sorts of figures, colors, and fashions; . . . damasks, satins, . . . and other cloths of all colors . . . They also bring musk, benzoin, and ivory; many bed ornaments, hangings, coverlets, and tapestries of embroidered velvet; . . . tablecloths, cushions, and carpets; . . . also some pearls and rubies, sapphires and crystal-stones; . . . quantities of fine thread of all kinds, needles, and knick-knacks; little boxes and writing-cases; beds, tables, chairs, and gilded benches, painted in many figures and patterns . . . even caged birds, some of which talk, while others sing, and they make them play innumerable tricks. The Chinese furnish numberless other gewgaws and ornaments of little value and worth, which are esteemed among the Spaniards; besides a quantity of fine crockery of all kinds; . . . other beads and precious stones of all colors; pepper and other spices; and rarities – which, did I refer to them all, I would never finish, nor have sufficient paper for it.⁵

China trade anecdotes from the period have a ring of contemporary familiarity. Bishop Domingo Salazar wrote King Philip in 1590 that:

What has pleased all of us here has been the arrival of a book-binder from Mexico. He brought books with him, set up a bindery, and hired a Sangley⁶ who had offered his services to him. The Sangley secretly, and without his master noticing it, watched how the latter bound books, and lo, in less than [blank space] he left the house, saying that he wished to serve him no longer, and set up a similar shop. I assure your Majesty that he became so excellent a workman that his master has been forced to give up the business, because the Sangley has drawn all the trade. His work is so good that there is no need of the Spanish tradesman.⁷

But the Chinese nose for business sometimes misled the visiting merchants. The Jesuit priest Diego de Bobadilla wrote in 1640:

These Chinese merchants are so keen after gain, that, if one sort of merchandise has succeeded well one year, they take a great deal of it the following year. A Spaniard who had lost his nose through a certain illness, sent for a Chinaman to make him one of wood, in order to hide the deformity. The workman made him so good a nose that the Spaniard in great delight paid him munificently, giving him twenty escudos. The Chinaman, attracted by the ease with which he had made that gain, loaded a fine boat-load of wooden noses the next year and returned to Manila. But he found himself very far from his hopes and quite left out in the cold; for, in order to have a sale for that new merchandise, he found that he would have to cut off the noses of all the Spaniards in the country.⁸

*

The Manila galleon would be recognisable today as a shipping line. There were regularly scheduled sailings with specially-built cargo ships. Indeed, for commercial and regulatory reasons – the number of sailings was soon restricted to just one each way per year – the ships grew to become among the largest ever constructed, reaching some 2000 tons, when most large ships were only a quarter of that size; they were the super-container ships of their day.

As a precursor of today's world-leading Asian shipyards, an entire shipping industry – producing locally-designed ships of locally-supplied materials, constructed and largely crewed by local labour – emerged in Cavite, right outside Manila, to supply the line. The

Philippines already had a strong indigenous ship-building tradition, with substantial supplies of local labour augmented by immigrant Chinese artisans. With the sole exception of iron, in which the Philippines was deficient, all other materials, from wood to fabric for sails and rope for rigging, could be supplied locally and from local industry. The galleons' reputation for durability and sturdiness was built upon the local hardwoods: the ships were relatively impervious to both cannonfire and shiprot.⁹

By 1587, single cargoes could be worth as much as 2 million pesos. However, such a huge expansion of trade was not without its problems, a number of which have a distinctly modern sound. One was huge inward migration of Chinese. By 1586, there were 10 000 Chinese in Manila, and despite attempts to control immigration through deportations, the number continued to grow, reaching an estimated 30 000 in 1602.¹⁰ In spite of the mutual profitability of the exercise, tensions would on occasion boil over into violence.

The trade also began untaxed and largely unregulated for a period that corresponded with its initial rapid growth. But there were soon vociferous complaints, largely from Spanish merchants who were losing out to competition, but also from Manileños who were being cut out by Mexican merchants dealing directly. In 1593, the Spanish authorities limited the number of annual sailings on the Acapulco-Manila route to two, and soon after to just one ship in each direction. The amount of trade was also nominally capped to a few hundred thousand pesos, a sum almost always exceeded several times over. American merchants from New Spain were prohibited from dealing with anyone except Manila-based merchants. A second route from Manila to Peru, the other great Spanish colony, was snuffed out after only a few voyages, because the goods they brought competed with Spanish manufactures, particularly Andalusian silk, coming from the other direction. There were many attempts to prohibit intra-American trade of Asian imports as well.

These restrictions could of course never be fully enforced, or much at all. While the freewheeling start of the shipping line became hemmed in by mercantilist regulation and state control, constraints were routinely flouted with false documentation, under-invoicing and outright contraband – practices hardly unknown in the centuries since. Accurate statistics on the trade are consequently hard to come by. The primary constraint on the trade was the physical one of the single ship per year.

By the early 1600s, some 400 people sailed on each ship, some 250 of which were officers, including a silver master responsible for the treasure chests on the way out from New Spain. Other crew included seamen, gunmen and soldiers. The crews were multi-ethnic: only a

few of the sailors were Spaniards, while the lower-level crew were largely Filipinos or other Asians.

The voyage was never pleasant and often dangerous: ships could and did sink. Out of the 400 sailings in the 250 years of the Manila galleon, there were fifty-nine shipwrecks.¹¹ The journey westward from Acapulco to Manila was relatively straightforward, a mere forty-five days if the winds were with the ship, and rarely longer than two months. The typical eastward return trip, however, could take up to six months, putting pressure on provisions and sanitation.

Even if the ship arrived, it was not uncommon for it to do so with fewer people than when it began its journey: the trip was long, provisions were few, scurvy and other diseases common. Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Careri, an Italian adventurer and traveller, made the trip and described it in his 1699 book *Giro del Mondo*, which appeared in English early in the 1700s:

There is Hunger, Thirst, Cold, continual Watching, and other Sufferings; besides the terrible Shocks from side to side, caused by the furious beating of the Waves . . . [T]he *Galeon* is never clear of an universal raging Itch, as an addition to all other Miseries . . . the Ship swarms with little Vermin, the *Spaniards* called *Gorgojos*, bred in the Bisket; so swift that they in a short time not only run over Cabbins, Beds, and the very Dishes the Men eat on, but insensibly fasten upon the Body . . . There are several other sorts of Vermin of sundry Colours that suck the Blood. Abundance of Flies fall into Dishes of Broth, in which there also swim Worms of several sorts.¹²

It was probably worse for the sailors who could be evicted from their quarters by better-connected passengers.

There was, it seems, some compensation: after complaining about the indigestibility of the dried buffalo meat and the maggots swimming in the broth, Careri notes that, ‘during the whole voyage, they never fail of Sweetmeats at Table, and Chocolates twice a Day, of which last the Sailors and Grummets make as great a Consumption, as the richest.’

Sickness prowled the ship due to exposure to ‘the Rains, Cold and other Hardships of the Season’, but in spite of:

The dreadful Sufferings in the prodigious Voyage, yet the desire of Gain prevails with many to venture through it, four, six, and some ten times. The very Sailors, tho’ they Forswear the voyage when out at Sea; yet when they come to Acapulco, for the lucre of 275 Pieces of Eight, the King allows them for the Return, never remember past sufferings; like Women after Labour.¹³

The total pay, writes Careri, was 350 of these coins, with only seventy-five paid on the way out. There was some justifiable concern that the Asian sailors might jump ship: ‘if they had half, very few would return to the *Philippine Islands* for the rest.’ Many stayed anyway, becoming part of the growing Asian immigrant population in New Spain to join, for example, their compatriots making palm wine.

Once was enough for Careri; he vowed never ‘to take that Voyage

again, which is enough to Destroy a Man, or make him unfit for anything as long as he Lives.'

*

Nevertheless, despite the shipwrecks and terrible conditions, the Manila galleon line lasted for 250 years, with sailings year in and year out. P&O, or rather Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, one of the most venerable of modern shipping lines, was, by contrast, founded only in 1837, less than two centuries ago.

The profits were tremendous. Careri estimated that merchants made 150 to 200 per cent; a single cargo could set one up for life. He wrote: 'it is a great Satisfaction to return Home in less than a Year with 17, or 18,000 Pieces of Eight clear Gains, besides a Man's own Venture; a Sum that may make a Man easy as long as he Lives.' The senior officers of the ship, he was told, might clear thousands, indeed tens of thousands, of dollars.

Profits may have kept the Manila galleon going, but its importance to our story is that trade was now, and for the first time, truly global.

III

The Emergence of the Global Economy

‘Although we call them the “Old World” and the “New World”, that’s because we only came across the latter recently, and not because there are actually two worlds: there is but one.’

– Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, *Comentarios reales de los incas*, 1609¹

Once the *tornaviaje* had established itself, voyages across the Pacific immediately became regular affairs. The Manila galleon provided the missing link in the world’s global trade network: for the first time, all the maritime routes – Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Ocean – were now operational in both directions, knitting Europe, the Americas, Asia and Africa together.

The Acapulco–Manila line itself formed part of a much longer single route of some 24 000 kilometres that connected Seville with Manila under a single governing jurisdiction: the *Casa de Contratación*, or ‘House of Trade’, in Seville. Asian silk, porcelain, ivory and spices would be sent across the Pacific from Manila to Acapulco. In these pre-Panama Canal days, goods had to cross the isthmus overland. The route – it might be too much to call it a ‘road’ (it was unpaved with mules providing most of the transport) – from Acapulco to Mexico City was known as the ‘*Camino de China*’. From Mexico City, goods continued to the Caribbean port of Veracruz, where they were loaded on the *Flota de Indias* – the West Indies Fleet – which sailed to Seville. Havana served as a transshipment hub. Goods such as wine, oil and manufactured products would go in the other direction.

Acapulco, its fine harbour notwithstanding, had little to recommend it. ‘As for the City of *Acapulco*,’ wrote world traveller Gemelli Careri, ‘I think it might more properly be call’d a poor Village of Fishermen, than the chief Mart of the South Sea, and Port for the Voyage to China; so mean and wretched are the Houses being made of nothing but Wood, Mud and Straw.’²

The arrival of the Manila galleon in Acapulco occasioned a huge

annual trade fair, during which the population swelled by thousands. Careri went on to observe that:

Most of the Officers and Merchants that came aboard the *Peru* Ships, went to lie ashore, bringing with them two Millions of Pieces of Eight to lay out in Commodities of *China*; so that . . . *Acapulco* was converted from a rustick village into a populous City; . . . to which was added . . . a great concourse of Merchants from *Mexico*, with abundance of Pieces of Eight and Commodities of the Country and of *Europe*.³



Aquapolque (Acapulco) by Nicolaes van Geelkercken, engraving, from *East and West Indian Mirror* (1619)

Alexander von Humboldt noted in his *Political Essay on the Kingdom of New Spain* that when he visited in 1803, it was still ‘the most renowned trade fair in the whole world’.⁴

✱

‘[T]hese wares are so cheap that their like cannot be supplied from Spain.’

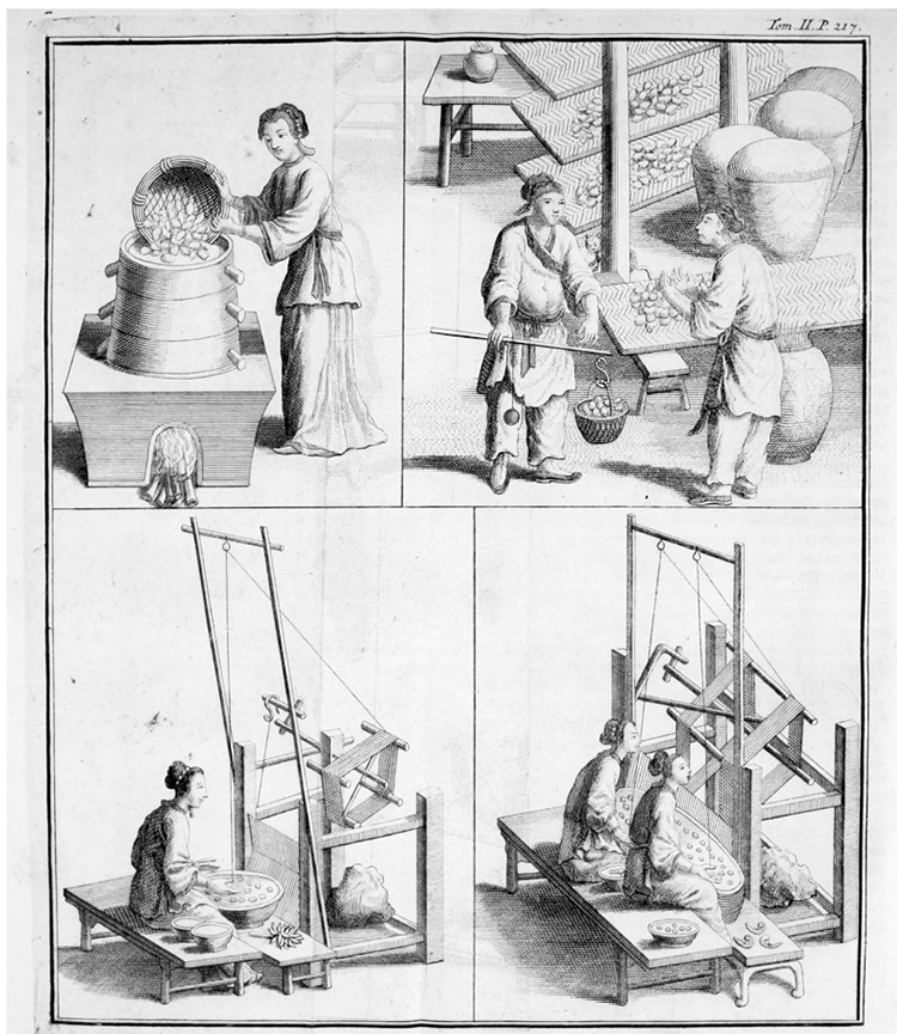
– Juan Grau y Malfalcon, 1637⁵

Unlike earlier centuries, and perhaps not since the Roman Empire, international trade now affected the consumption of relatively ordinary people. Textiles made up the bulk of goods imported into Mexico. These were not just silk, and not just fabric: they also included finished items such as clothing, bed linens and rugs. These were the mass-market consumer goods of the age, which city-dwellers came to expect and rural populations desired. Everyone, it seemed,

from the indigenous peoples now forced by Spanish convention and law to wear clothing, to sophisticated city-dwellers, went about in garments made from Asian silks and cottons. Asian, and mostly Chinese-supplied, consumer goods that were once luxuries became necessities.

*

By a century or so into the Manila galleon, Manila merchants offered a wide range of cottons from India's Coromandel Coast, including calicoes, chitas, cambays and gingham. ⁶ Manila wasn't just an entrepôt for China anymore.



Silk manufacturing in China, from Jean-Baptiste du Halde, *Description Geographique de l'empire de la chine*, vol. 2, p. 217 (1736)

The porcelain trade offers particular examples of the increasingly global nature of commerce. Chinese manufacturers developed new products for the American market, the consumption of chocolate providing a notable illustration. Based on local indigenous practice, chocolate was drunk from coconut shells or gourds known as *jícaras*, which later in the colonial period were kept upright in silver mounts called *mancerinas*. Both *jícaras* and *mancerinas* were soon redesigned in porcelain for American and European markets by Chinese manufacturers in Jingdezhen, where porcelain production increasingly took on industrial characteristics as factories expanded in size and complexity.⁷ Mexico's main domestic pottery industry in Puebla, meanwhile, emulated the Chinese blue and white style as well as several of the Chinese forms, such as double gourds and high-shouldered vases.⁸ Shards of broken porcelain, known as *chinitas*, were also used as small coinage.

The economy of New Spain became dependent on the Asian trade. In 1637, Juan Grau y Malfalcon, procurator-general for Manila, wrote to King Philip IV that, 'the trade of the Philippines is so necessary today in New Spain, that the latter country finds it as difficult as do the islands to get along without that trade.'⁹

Trade supported local industry. Grau y Malfalcon noted that raw silk imports provided raw material for 14 000 Mexican weavers, while imported Asian cottons, 'are so cheap that their like cannot be supplied from Spain . . . For the Indians and blacks care only for the linens of China and the Philippines, and, if they do not have them, they get along without them . . .'¹⁰ To counter what would today be called 'protectionism', he argued that cheap Asian cloth was even necessary to the operation of the ever-important mines:

Consequently, with one thousand pesos' worth of it they maintained their mining operations longer than they could with five thousand worth of that from Spain. From that it follows that if [the supply of] it were to fail, the mines would necessarily decrease; and that would redound to the greater damage of the royal treasury, and to that of the country, your vassals, and commerce . . .¹¹

This trade in industrial goods integrating the two economies also went beyond textiles. China served as a source of the mercury used in the extraction of the silver, which underlaid the entire trade. Although the most important source of mercury was in the Peruvian town of Huancavelica, attempts were made to import it from China via Manila. Humboldt reported that it was found to be impure, with high levels of lead.¹²

Trade goods and their influence extended beyond the Americas. Much of the silk, porcelain and spices that entered Acapulco found its way to Spain. But a particularly illustrative example is the famous and still immensely popular Manila shawl (*mantón de Manila*), a square

piece of fringed silk lavishly and vividly embroidered with flowers, birds and other images. This staple of Spanish fashion has its origins in Guangdong. Its name reflects the route it took.

Commercial integration extended to people as well as goods. In 1635, Spanish barbers (who engaged in bloodletting as well as haircutting and were thus a sort of medical practitioner) in Mexico City complained to the municipal council of unfair competition from Chinese barbers. The council sided with the complainants and recommended that the Chinese barbershops be limited to twelve and be relegated to the suburbs.¹³ In 1667, there were however more than 100 (mostly unlicensed) Asian barbershops operating within Mexico City.

Asian immigrants were also active in various other professions. The early seventeenth-century visitor and prelate Thomas Gage noted that, 'The goldsmiths' shops and works are to be admired, the Indians and the people of China that have been made Christians and every year come thither, have perfected the Spaniards in that trade.'¹⁴

The flow of people was largely unidirectional: Chinese merchants went to Manila, but Spanish merchants rarely returned the favour, nor did China allow it; Chinese and Filipinos went to the Americas in tens if not hundreds of thousands, while Spaniards went to Manila in hundreds and thousands and to China – even including missionaries – in perhaps dozens. Furthermore, this international trade played a far greater proportional role in the Americas and the Philippines – given that it was Manila's sole reason for existence – than it did in China, whose economy was much larger and more diversified.

Influence nevertheless went in both directions. China could not help but be affected by the increased commercial activity. Demand for goods drove not just manufacturing in China, but the export-oriented manufacturing sector in particular that was to stand China in good stead in the next few centuries. More significantly, China was transformed by crops introduced from the New World as part of what has come to be known as the 'Columbian Exchange'. These new crops arrived more by agricultural diffusion than by the sort of commercial trade that was the Manila galleon's primary *raison-d'être*. The money may have been in Asian cash crops like spices and tea, but maize, sweet potatoes and peanuts – which could be grown in previously marginally arable land – allowed the Chinese population growth to spike upwards in the eighteenth century.

There had of course been movements of goods, people, crops and ideas before, some even transformative. But never between all the continents, and never on this scale. And because of the asymmetry in the trade and migration patterns, the centre of all this movement and mixing was not Canton, Beijing, Madrid, London or even

Constantinople; it was instead Mexico City, the very place whose people, upon the successful return of Urdaneta from the Philippines, came to 'believe that they will be the center of the world'.¹⁵

IV

The First World City

‘those of Mexico . . . believe that they will be the center of the world.’

– Spanish letter about the discovery of the *tornaviaje*, 1566¹

Several cities today, notably London, New York and Hong Kong, have claims to being a ‘world city’, a place where people, goods and ideas meet, with money an essential accelerant; many others aspire to the status.

But the first world city was none of these: it was Mexico City. Indeed, for two centuries, Mexico was arguably the centre of the world, the place where Asia, Europe and the Americas all met, and where people intermingled and exchanged everything from genes to textiles.

Even before the advent of the Manila galleon trade, New Spain was immensely rich from the wealth of the conquered indigenous peoples. Bishop-elect Juan de Zumárraga wrote to Charles V in 1529 that, ‘Silks are so common here that mechanics and servants of people of the lower classes, and women of the same, and mistresses and spinsters go about covered with silks, capes and smocks and skirts and kerchiefs . . .’²

The silks referred to by Zumárraga in his letter were probably locally-produced: sericulture had been introduced to Mexico from Spain by Hernán Cortés. Raw silk from China via the Manila galleon replaced local Mexican silk, one of the economic dislocations caused by Asian competition.

It was this wealth in the Americas, rather than just the markets back in Europe, that provided the economic impetus for the galleon trade and kept it going for two and a half centuries. In 1610, the poet Bernardo de Balbuena, who hailed from Mexico, in a work grandiloquently entitled *La Grandeza Mexicana* (*The Grandeur of Mexico City*) described it as ‘the richest and most opulent city, with the most trade and the most treasure . . .’³

Visitors remarked on the extravagance. Thomas Gage, who had

travelled through Mexico in 1625, wrote disparagingly of what he saw as ostentatious luxury, ‘Both men and women are excessive in their apparel, using more silks than stuffs and cloths; precious stones and pearls further much this their vain ostentation; a hatband and rose, made of diamonds, in a gentleman’s hat, is common, and a hatband of pearls is ordinary in a tradesman.’⁴ He noted the city’s wide streets and innumerable coaches, some of which, ‘exceed the cost of the best of the court of Madrid and other parts of Christendom; for there they spare no silver, nor gold, nor precious stones, nor cloth of gold, nor the best silks of China to enrich them.’ Marvelling at the opulence of religious establishments, Gage observed:

There is in the cloister of the Dominicans a lamp hanging in the church, with 300 branches made of silver, to hold so many candles, beside 100 little lamps for oil set in it, every one being made of several workmanship, so exquisitely, that it is valued at four hundred thousand ducats; and with such like curious works are many streets made more rich and beautiful by the shops of goldsmiths . . .⁵

These were the same goldsmiths presumably staffed, as he said, by ‘the Indians and the people of China’.

However, commerce did not lead merely to ostentation. Inexpensive textiles, as we have seen, were crucial to the economy. Yet another result was a convergence of different sorts of cosmopolitanism and sophistication. Chocolate, for example, the first of several hot drinks to conquer the world and define modern leisure consumption, was – being a Mexican drink to begin with – developed in the Americas before being introduced to Europe. And chocolate was drunk, as we have already noted, from Chinese porcelain copies of indigenous American drinking vessels.

*

By the 1540s, three decades before the arrival of the first galleons from Asia, Mexico City was already one of the richest cities in the world, but it was a cultural and intellectual centre as well. Boasting a printing press as early as 1535, and universities decades before any of its North American counterparts, it was a city of books, writers and students, providing fertile ground for the intellectual and cultural input from Asia later in the century.

Juan González de Mendoza conducted the research for his history of China, *Historia de las cosas más notables, ritos y costumbres del gran reyno de la China*⁶ (published in Rome in 1585), in Mexico, where he interviewed trans-Pacific travellers. Translated into several languages, this was the first bestseller on China, and remained one for decades. Mexico’s own printing presses turned out original works such as Antonio de Morga’s *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* (*Events in the Philippine*

Islands), published in Mexico in 1609, a firsthand account of Spanish relations with China, Japan and Southeast Asia, which remains an important reference for understanding the region at the turn of the century.⁷

In Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, seventeenth-century Mexico produced a world-class poet and one of the first feminists to boot:

Hombres necios que acusáis
You foolish men who lay
a la mujer sin razón,
the guilt on women,
sin ver que sois la ocasión
not seeing you're the cause
de lo mismo que culpáis . . .
of the very thing you blame . . .⁸

*

When Asians started arriving in Mexico – almost as soon as the Acapulco–Manila line started running – it was already a multicultural, cosmopolitan place. During the period of the Manila galleon, 40 000 to 60 000 and perhaps as many as 100 000 Asians – mostly Chinese and, in particular Filipinos – passed through Acapulco to settle in New Spain. The majority were sailors; by the early 1600s, most of the sailors on the Pacific route were East Asians. Some came as servants and some, unfortunately, came as slaves. The list of occupations of these early Asian migrants included barbers, vendors of imported goods, harp players, dancers, scribes, tailors, cobblers, silversmiths and coachmen.⁹

In Mexico City's Plaza Mayor, known today as Zócalo, there was an outdoor marketplace of stalls and shops called the Parián after the Chinese district in Manila. In this market Asian vendors mixed with those from the world over. The Parián became a permanent edifice at the turn of the eighteenth century, while the term *parián* became the word for 'marketplace' in many cities of Mexico.

The poet Bernardo de Balbuena said that, in Mexico, 'the best of all the world, the cream of what is known and produced, here abounds, is sold and cheap'¹⁰; he listed spices from Southeast Asia, ivory, diamonds, Chinese porcelain, Indian fabrics, Siamese ebony and rubies and emeralds from India and Ceylon.

Asian influence entered the arts and products of the New World. Chinese blue and white porcelain was, as we have seen, extensively emulated. Japanese lacquer desks and Chinese wall-hangings were copied and adapted locally. The sixteenth Viceroy, Lope Díez de Armendáriz at some point between 1635 and 1640 received a folding screen called a *biombo* in Spanish, the word derived from the Japanese

byōbu. This particular example has panels painted in traditional European style showing some of Mexico City's best-known spots, such as the Plaza Mayor or Zócalo, with however very Japanese-looking gilt scroll clouds. Furthermore, a Mexican painting technique called *enconchado*, typified by a painted over mother-of-pearl, developed as a fusion of pre-Columbian and perhaps Asian shell inlay, European oils and Japanese lacquer.

Balbuena, all the way back in 1610, described his city in what must still stand today as the definition of a 'world city': 'In you, Spain joins with China, Italy with Japan, and finally the whole world in commerce and order . . .'¹¹

*

While Manila did not approach Mexico City in urbanisation or sophistication, and so perhaps did not qualify as a 'world city', its role at the Asian terminus of the Manila galleon meant that it rapidly developed into a regional trading hub. Although trade with Chinese merchants dominated, ships from around Asia, and as far away as India, also anchored in Manila.

Manila was, in terms of population, very much a Chinese city. The Chinese (or *Sangleyes* as they were known) constituted the commercial core of the city, even while they were confined to the *Parián* – beginning a pattern of urban sinicisation that was to repeat itself throughout Southeast Asia. In his account of his trip around the world, Careri wrote: 'Within a Musket Shot of the Gate of Parian, is the Habitation of the Chinese merchants called *Sangley*, who in several Streets have rich Shops of Silk, Purcellane, and other Commodities. Here are found all the Arts and Trade, so that all the Citizens are worth, runs through their Hands, through the fault of the Spaniards and Indians, who apply themselves to nothing.'¹²

Manila played a key role in the dissemination of information about China. Martín de Rada, who had sailed with the Legazpi expedition, acquired the first Western library of Chinese books as early as 1575. His accounts provided much of the material for Mendoza's history. The first translation of a classical Chinese text into a European language also took place in Manila: the *Mingxin baojian*, rendered by Juan Cobo as *Espejo rico del claro corazón*.¹³ The translation was published in Manila in 1593, and was printed, interestingly enough, using the Chinese method of woodblocks.¹⁴ Cobo also translated Seneca into Chinese. The University of Santo Tomas, founded in 1611, more than two decades before Harvard, is the oldest continuously operating university in the Philippines.

It was hardly smooth sailing. The Spanish presence was numerically

small and outnumbered not only by Filipinos but by the new immigrant Chinese community. While the various ethnic communities – Spanish, Filipino, Chinese, Japanese – coexisted, ethnic friction and perceived existential threats could boil over with disastrously fatal consequences. Many thousands of Chinese were killed in the infamous 1603 massacre. But, in spite of being largely illegal under Chinese law, the lure of trade was irresistible, and the numbers of Chinese residents nevertheless soon rebounded.

Manila, as curious as it must seem today, was subordinate to Mexico rather than Spain until the end of the eighteenth century. This, in effect, gave American Mexico an Asian province while simultaneously engendering early Asian links with the New World that were, in terms of population flows, larger than those with Europe. One peculiar result of these relationships and Spanish control of the Pacific was to put Mexico closer to the cutting edge of international diplomacy than a colony otherwise would have been. In 1613, the Japanese diplomatic mission of Hasekura Tsunenaga went first to New Spain before proceeding to Europe. After meeting the emperor and pope, and converting to Catholicism, the mission returned to Japan by the same route in 1619.

Another peculiar result of the Spain-Mexico-Manila axis was the rise of world's first currency in common and accepted use across multiple continents. Pre-dating both the pound and the greenback, it was a currency emanating from Mexico. Minted in the Americas, Spanish milled dollars became the currency of choice throughout most of East Asia.

V

A Global Currency

‘[Silver] is the most valuable article in the Acapulco ships which sail to Manilla. The silver of the new continent seems in this manner to be one of the principal commodities by which the commerce between the two extremities of the old one is carried on, and it is by means of it, in a great measure, that those distant parts of the world are connected with one another.’

— Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*¹

There are two sides to every trade. But the Spaniards hankering for the riches of China ran across an immediate problem: China had little interest in outside goods. Don Martín Enríquez, the viceroy in Mexico, wrote the King in December 1570, just after the first round trips across the Pacific:

And one of the difficulties consequent upon this commerce and intercourse is, that neither from this land nor from Spain, so far as can now be learned, can anything be exported thither which they do not already possess. They have an abundance of silks, and linen likewise, according to report. Cloths, on account of the heat prevalent in the country, they never use nor value. Wax, drugs, and cotton are super-abundant in the islands, whither the Chinese go to obtain them by barter.²

There was, however, one thing the Chinese would accept: ‘And thus, to make a long story short, the commerce with that land must be carried on with silver, which they value above all other things; and I am uncertain whether your Majesty will consent to this on account of having to send it to a foreign kingdom.’³

Silver nevertheless became the main commodity of the Manila galleon trade, a situation continually agonised over and sometimes regretted in the decades and centuries to come. But whether measured in the many tens of tons or several millions of pesos, a staggering amount of silver passed annually from the Americas into the Chinese money supply. Silver was so central to the developments of this period that the trans-Pacific trade route that we have called it *la ruta de la plata* – a silver, rather than silk, road that changed the global economy forever.

Silver had come to dominate the Chinese economy by the sixteenth

century. Paper money, which China pioneered, had all but collapsed in value due to rampant overprinting, requiring a return to metallic coinage. Gold coins came in denominations too large for ordinary transactions, while copper coins came with their own problems: silver coins can be assayed for purity, but the only way to test a copper coin was to melt it down, which rather defeated the purpose of having coins in the first place. Copper coins also came in multiple varieties of weights and metal content, which made transactions onerous. Silver was just simpler.⁴

By the late sixteenth century, the Ming Dynasty had consolidated all taxes into payments in silver – the Single-Whip system – even for peasants, who were no longer permitted to pay in kind.⁵ The Chinese money supply, serving more than a quarter of the world's population, had been standardised on silver. China, however, had limited available silver of its own, and while considerable amounts came – via Portuguese intermediaries, as it turns out – from mines in Japan, these evidently did not suffice.

Spain's colonies in America did, however, have supplies of silver that could at times seem unlimited.

*

Soy el rico Potosí, del mundo soy el tesoro; soy el rey de los montes, envidia soy de los reyes' ('I am rich Potosí, the treasure of the world; the king of mountains, the envy of kings').

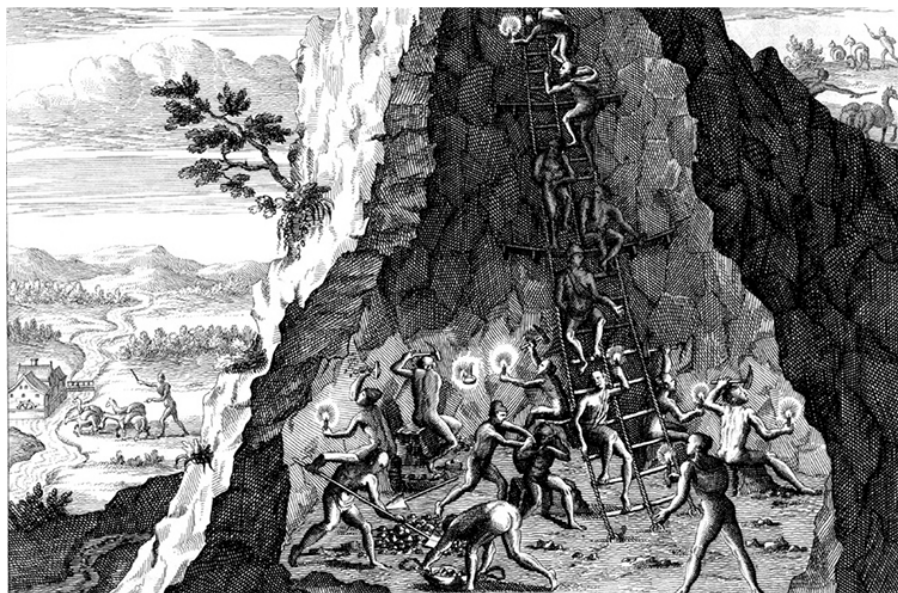
— From the inscription on Potosí's coat-of-arms, bestowed by Emperor Charles V⁶

Juan Niño de Tabora, governor of the Philippines, wrote of the Chinese to the King in 1628 that, 'their god is silver, and their religion the various ways that they have of gaining it'.⁷ If that were so, the Chinese god lived up a mountain in the high Andes.

In 1545, the great silver mine at Potosí was discovered at 4 000 metres in what is now Bolivia. It soon became the single largest source of silver in the world, at times producing more than half the world's silver. Within a few decades, Potosí had a population larger than any other city in the Americas, equivalent to that of Paris or London. 'This would be the modern-day equivalent of, say, 20 million people moving to a spot on Alaska's North Slope,' write Flynn and Giraldez.⁸

The initial inscription was updated to: '*Para el poderoso Emperador, para el sabio Rey, este excelso monte de plata conquistará el mundo.*'⁹ ('For the powerful Emperor, for the wise King, this lofty mountain of silver will conquer the world.') Potosí is referenced in Don Quixote; Matteo Ricci placed it on his Chinese world map in 1602. By the end of the sixteenth century, Potosí boasted three dozen casinos, more

than a dozen dance halls, eighty churches and fountains with wine and *chicha*, Andean corn beer.¹⁰



Theodore de Bry, miners in Potosí, engraving (1590)

This was mining on an industrial scale, augmented by one of history's more important – but certainly unhealthy – industrial innovations: the use of mercury rather than smelting to extract the silver from the ore, thus making lower-grade ores economical and extending the life of the mine. That this silver amalgamation process was invented in Mexico in the mid-sixteenth century is another indication of the general level of sophistication, intellectual and otherwise, that could be found in Spanish America.

The resources – the actual metal – technically belonged to the Crown, but the mining itself was outsourced for a one-fifth royalty, or *quinta*. The balance, less the cost of production (relatively low, thanks to silver amalgamation) remained as profit, explaining the wealth and purchasing power in the colonies: there was a lot of money looking for things to buy. And it found them in Asia via the Manila galleon.

The numbers are staggering: by far the bulk of the world's silver emanated from Spanish America, and of that amount, about a third (other estimates are higher¹¹) ended up directly or indirectly in China.

The economics of these silver-for-silks transactions have been much written about, but there are some additional aspects worth considering. Silver, although a commodity, is also a currency. So while it is true that the silverisation of the Chinese economy resulted in the price of silver soaring, the question remains: relative to what? A dollar is always, by definition, worth a dollar, and an ounce of silver is

always worth an ounce of silver.

A merchant by the name of Pedro de Baeza provided an explanation in 1609: 'For as much as throughout all the kingdom of China there is an enormous quantity of fine gold of more than twenty-two carats touch; if this were brought to New Spain, or to Castile, a profit of 75 to 80 per cent would be made on the price as between one region and the other.'¹² He is advocating what today we might call exchange rate arbitrage: profiting from the different rates of exchanges that prevail in different markets. He further explains:

[Gold] is regarded in China as a commodity which rises and falls in accordance with the supply and the demand, and it does not have a fixed value there as here in Castile. A peso of gold in China is often worth 5 ½ pesos of silver, and if there is a shortage thereof and a demand for it elsewhere, the rate may rise to six or 6 ½ silver pesos for one of gold. The dearest at which I have ever bought it or seen it sold in the city of Canton in China, was 7 ½ silver pesos for one of gold, and I never saw it go higher, nor has it done so hitherto. Whereas in Spain a peso of gold is usually worth 12 ½ silver pesos, whereby it can be seen how more than 75 to 80 per cent can be gained on gold which is exported from China.¹³

In other words, priced in gold, silver was worth relatively more in China than in Spain. One might then expect gold to flow out of China as silver flowed in, and this is what happened.¹⁴

The great eighteenth-century economist, Adam Smith, took note of exactly this in *The Wealth of Nations*, published in 1776, towards the end of the galleon period:

. . . in the East Indies, particularly in China and Indostan, the value of the precious metals, when the Europeans first began to trade to those countries, was much higher than in Europe; and it still continues to be so . . . It is more advantageous, too, to carry silver thither than gold; because in China, and the greater part of the other markets of India, the proportion between fine silver and fine gold is but as ten, or at most as twelve to one; whereas in Europe it is as fourteen or fifteen to one. In China, and the greater part of the other markets of India, ten, or at most twelve ounces of silver, will purchase an ounce of gold; in Europe, it requires from fourteen to fifteen ounces.¹⁵

The inverse is that Asian goods were worth a lot more silver once exported to the Americas than they were back in Asia. The abundance of silver did not itself make it cheap for merchants; while the cost of capital (that is, the interest rate if they had to borrow it) might have been lower than if capital were not so plentiful, merchants nevertheless would have paid a peso for every peso. Their profit could only come from direct silver-gold arbitrage above – or, since the traders were on the whole merchants rather than bankers, channeling the transactions through goods.

Arbitrage opportunities occur when there are economic imbalances; arbitrage itself tends to correct those imbalances. By 1635, the silver-gold exchange rate in China had collapsed to approximately the rate previously reported for Spain, greatly reducing or eliminating the

profits from mining.

The world's financial markets were now, for the first time, global. Up until the sixteenth century, the financial links between the continents had a lot of play in them: there was little mechanism to transmit what today would be called contagion. Potosí changed that, first by delivering what must have seemed like a limitless supply of bullion to the Spanish Crown, and then into the economy as a whole. With the *tornaviaje* and the direct access to the differential silver-gold exchange rates of China, the value of that silver doubled almost overnight.

Money supplies were also now global rather than just regional. Relative prices that were out of sync with world averages tended to be arbitrated away, directly or through trade, while inflation or other economic problems were no longer constrained to a single economy. China's move to a silver-based economy affected the economic trajectory of Europe. The primary link was the Manila galleon.

All of this came from a single ship, albeit a very large one, in each direction every year: as improbable as that may seem, populations and economies – and hence trade – were a great deal smaller four centuries ago. Spain, for example, had a population of just 7 million, smaller even than the population of Hong Kong today. Two thousand tons of cargo in one direction and a few million pesos of silver in the other could and did create and move markets.

Some of the first visible consequences arose a few decades into the sixteenth century. Because the actual supply of silver was almost entirely outside China's control – as if the United States used, say, oil for money – the Chinese money supply was in danger of sharp contractions from external shocks. Starting in 1638, three galleons were lost in succession, with both goods and silver going to the bottom of the sea. Potosí was going through a bad patch. Japanese restrictions on trade with Europeans, starting in 1635, also greatly curtailed the other great source of silver.¹⁶ Considerable effort has been made over the years to quantify the inflows of silver to China; inflows are however, not the same as the money supply itself, which is at least to some extent cumulative. Money supply is therefore a difficult number to measure. Nevertheless, a sharp cut in imports must have constrained the money supply, the economy and the ability to pay taxes. While cause and effect remain inconclusive, the Ming Dynasty fell in the next decade.

Spain, meanwhile, was affected by the diminished profitability of silver extraction. Due to the inflation caused by previous decades of increased supply, the silver they had lost its buying power. It was precisely in the early 1640s that Spain suffered the first decisive military and political defeats, resulting in withdrawing from a major

role in European affairs.

Then as today, the West – Europe and the Americas – minted money, which it sent to China in exchange for consumer goods. China manufactured and the West consumed. The results this engendered sound familiar: Western domestic industry was undercut by imports, money was spent on consumption rather than investment, increases in the money supply led to inflation. The Chinese economy, meanwhile, became subject to financial shocks outside its control. But if China had not acted as a sink for the American-sourced silver, even more of it would surely have ended up in Europe, possibly resulting in economic and political distortions even greater than those Spain experienced as it was.

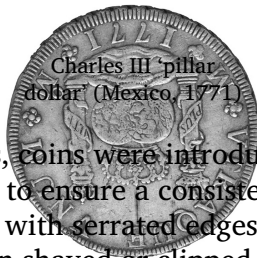
Something of a pause set in in the mid-1600s, as China worked through the political and economic difficulties surrounding the fall of the Ming Dynasty and accession of the Qing. Spain's tendency to overextend itself in European military adventures had also finally caught up with it. But a second silver boom picked up in the eighteenth century. Chinese population growth had increased due to the new crops introduced from America, and the increased demand caused silver prices to spike again relative to gold. Demand was met this time mostly from Mexican mines; more silver was produced in Spanish America in the eighteenth century than in the previous two centuries combined. By mid-century, the silver-gold rate had returned to balance.¹⁷

But this later period of eighteenth century expansion coincided with a significant financial innovation: the introduction of the 'milled' Spanish dollar. There had already been 'Spanish dollars' before this. The term actually derives from the German *thaler*, a coin dating from the early sixteenth century. Equivalents, known as *real de a ocho* or *peso de ocho* (whence 'pieces of eight') were minted in Spain and the New World from the sixteenth century. Each was worth eight reales, a different denomination of 3.44 grams of silver.

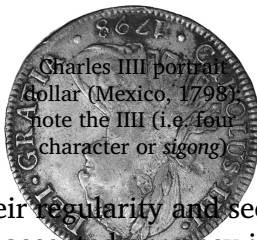


'Cob' 8 reales, Philip III (Mexico, 1610)

Mexico had had a mint since 1536. Minting was, at that time, a largely manual process. *Macuquinas*, or 'cobs', were made by cutting a silver bar into pieces of the appropriate weight and then striking a design onto them with a hammer and die. The cobs' irregular shape made them susceptible to clipping – a common practice.



But in the 1730s, coins were introduced whose blanks were made on a milling machine to ensure a consistent weight and size. Their edges were also raised with serrated edges, meaning that it was easy to tell if metal had been shaved or clipped off. These coins, known as *real fuerte columnario*, *columnarios de mundos y mares* or 'pillar dollars' were minted in Mexico City from 1732 to 1772, at which point Charles III decreed that the coins must show his portrait. Their name derives from the original design of two globes – representing the Old and New Worlds – between pillars, under a crown.



As a result of their regularity and security features, these coins became the most widely accepted currency in the world and, indeed, the first to approach universal acceptance. The portrait coins were nicknamed

‘head dollars’ (*fanmian*) in Chinese. The coins of Charles III and Charles IV (or IIII) were known as *sangong* and *sigong* (three-character and four-character) coins respectively.¹⁸ They were also known by the Chinese as ‘Buddha heads’ (*foutou*) due to the perceived resemblance of the busts of the Spanish monarchs to images of the Buddha.

China, curiously, seems not to have minted silver coins. Ingots, measured by the *tael*, varied from place to place and from trade to trade, making it a clumsy medium of exchange. As a result, Spanish dollar coins progressively competed with and replaced the *tael*: standardised coinage facilitated trade. Many examples of Spanish dollars can be seen today with Chinese chops or assay marks.

The Manila galleon came to an end in 1815 with the advent of the Mexican War of Independence. But the coin lived on. In the 1850s, the Mexican ‘eagle’ dollar was formally accepted as a substitute. Various ‘trade dollars’ sprang up, including the French Indochinese *piastre*, using the same specification. The yuan and yen are both direct descendants; both mean ‘round’, as the coin was. Even the British did not use the pound in Hong Kong, but instead introduced the Hong Kong dollar on the same model. The name for the Malaysian version, the ringgit, is an old Malay word meaning ‘jagged’, and refers to the Spanish dollars’ serrated edges.

Even the US dollar derived from the same coin, which was in fact legal tender until the mid-nineteenth century. The expression ‘two bits’ for twenty-five cents comes from the old ‘piece of eight’. Stocks in the United States were priced in one-eighth-dollar increments until the end of the twentieth century.

The US dollar and the Chinese yuan are cousins if not siblings. Both are descendants of the eighteenth-century Spanish milled dollar. So if, as some commentators speculate, the Chinese yuan ends up replacing the US dollar as the world’s reserve currency, then – in some ways – nothing very much will have changed.

VI

The Birth of Globalisation

The key element in the term ‘globalisation’ is ‘global’. Not only were critical elements of globalisation in place by the early modern period, but we can date its inception exactly. Whatever processes of internationalisation and integration might have been underway before 1565 and Urdaneta’s *tornaviaje*, they were regional rather than global in scope. According to Dennis O. Flynn and Arturo Giráldez:

Global trade emerged when 1) all heavily populated continents began to exchange products continuously— both with each other directly and indirectly via other continents—and 2) the value of the goods exchanged became sufficient to generate lasting impacts on all trading partners. It is true that important intercontinental trade existed prior to the 16th century, but there was no direct trade link between America and Asia before the founding of Manila as a Spanish entrepôt in 1571. Prior to that year, the world market was not yet fully coherent or complete; after that year it was.¹

That the world was a very different place in 1566 than it was in 1564 is clearly shown by how quickly the Manila galleon trade developed: there were regular commercial sailings within a decade. If, as Flynn and Giráldez do, one puts the actual start date a few years later at 1571–73 (giving Legazpi time to found Manila and send an actual Chinese cargo to Acapulco), then the ramping up happened with a speed that would seem enviable even today. From inception to execution, the new shipping line took less time than the Transcontinental railroad, the Trans-Siberian railroad, the Suez or Panama Canals or even the Internet.

Each of the elements that characterise globalisation – global trade networks, shipping lines, integrated financial markets, flows of cultures and peoples – can be found in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. A global currency based around the Spanish ‘dollar’ predated the US dollar’s similar role by two centuries. The attributes of today’s world cities typified Mexico 400 years ago.

Globalisation itself, therefore, evidently predates everything that conventional (Anglo-American) wisdom holds necessary for it: the Enlightenment, steam, free trade, laissez-faire capitalism, liberal

political systems and the more recent, Western-initiated multinational institutions as such more recent the World Bank and IMF. Whatever it is that sparks and sustains globalisation cannot be linked to this particular narrative, for the basic structures of globalisation existed at least two centuries before any of these developments took root.

Globalisation is a matter of degree, not a binary. But it was during the decidedly Spanish-dominated decades straddling the turn of the sixteenth century that humanity's activities first reached global scale.

This was when the first trade networks united Asia, Europe, the Americas, as well as, it should be added, Africa, with uninterrupted commercial shipping. It was also the period when the world's financial markets first became linked through the medium of silver. A century or so later, but well within the Manila galleon period, the world's first global currency emerged in the form of the milled Spanish silver dollar that in turn begat currencies in countries from the United States to China and Japan.

These networks and interactions were not nearly as sophisticated or integrated as those today, nor were they as fast. After all, the news that Portugal had succeeded in regaining independence from the Spanish crown in December 1640 didn't reach Macau until 31 May 1642 – much slower than the Internet even on a very bad day. But from 1565 on, what happened in China no longer just stayed in China. In a single sentence in 1609, Pedro de Baeza discusses currency markets in China, Europe and the Americas.² Before 1565, the discovery of a mountain of silver only affected China once the metal travelled through the markets of Europe, the Levant, India and elsewhere. After 1565, ingots and coins could be placed in a ship and reach China within months, with minimal intermediaries and mark-ups. It was not quite a telegraphic transfer, but neither was it a process of slow diffusion via indirect trade.

Nor were these early-modern networks the result, as today's are, of deliberate government policy. Indeed, many if not most of the Chinese and Spanish traders were operating contrary to laws and regulations promulgated by their respective emperors: globalisation took root in spite of concerted official efforts to prevent it. Globalisation, had anyone stopped to think about it, was hardly a foregone conclusion, however inevitable it looks today. The historian Manel Ollé makes the point that Sino-Spanish interactions in the sixteenth century were an ambivalent process, intensively commercial but socially and institutionally unstable.³

Despite the uncertainty, however, globalisation had then the effects one might have expected. In China, overseas demand drove manufacturing and economic growth, which in turn supported the population growth made possible by the innovation in new crops.

Financial integration created arbitrage opportunities, which led to more efficient allocation of financial resources; this integration in turn allowed contagion from one economy to another, such as the economic shocks of ship sinkings – a single sinking would knock out a year's trade.

The Manila galleons sailed for two and a half centuries, until 1815 and the dawn of a new era of independence for most of Spanish America. The world was during this period a very different place from the one it would later become.

China had the largest, most productive and most dynamic economy in the world. Even a couple of centuries later, Adam Smith would still write in *The Wealth of Nations*: 'China is a much richer country than any part of Europe, and the difference between the price of subsistence in China and in Europe is very great. Rice in China is much cheaper than wheat is anywhere in Europe.'⁴

China was and still is the factory to the world. During the Manila galleon trade, however, Chinese products were competing not just on price but also on their unsurpassed quality. Consumer-product innovation was mostly an East Asian and largely Chinese monopoly: it was manufacturers in the West – Mexico and then Europe – that copied Asian silks, porcelain, screens, fans and furniture – not the other way around. The China of the sixteenth century looked to the West not for development or investment, but rather for the silver needed for the Chinese money supply.

China was not just the most economically developed country in the world, it was also the most powerful. Unlike the 1840s, when British ships could force their way up the Pearl River and require China to buy opium, gunboat commerce was not a practical option for the early-modern Europeans in the region.

Combining force with commerce was successful only in the Southeast Asian periphery where, for example, it was Dutch East India Company policy – according to the company's Governor-General in 1614 – that 'trade cannot be maintained without war'.⁵ But none of Spain, Portugal or Holland was able to project much force against large, long-standing nations in East Asia. They managed at best only politically insignificant footholds on the coasts of China and Japan, whence they were always in danger of being expelled. China was able to require that trade take place on its own terms, restricted to certain ports and times.

In Japan, after decades of religious conflict, the Tokugawa rulers decided to expel the Portuguese and closed their borders, except to the Dutch, whom they restricted to the small man-made island of Dejima in 1640, a situation which lasted for more than two centuries until Commodore Perry appeared with his Black Ships in 1853. More than a

century into this period, in 1661, the Chinese rebel leader and Ming loyalist Koxinga ejected the Dutch from Formosa, now Taiwan, and even threatened Manila before he died suddenly the next year.

*



Jodocus Hondius's 'reduced' map of China (Amsterdam, 1607)

Asia's integration into global markets was, of course, not limited to the Manila galleon trade. In yet another manifestation of globalisation in this early period, Europeans – notably the Portuguese and then the Dutch – soon came to play a major role in Asia's regional and transcontinental trade. European third-parties transported goods within Asia and also acted as intermediaries in the Chinese-Japanese silver trade.

While this commercial footprint was not itself an indication of either military or political power, it probably comes as no surprise that some on the ground harboured such delusions. In 1576, the governor of the Philippines, Francisco de Sande, wrote Philip II proposing an invasion of China, which he said 'would be very easy', requiring just a few thousand men:

The equipments necessary for this expedition are four or six thousand men, armed with lances and arquebuses, and the ships, artillery, and necessary munitions. With two or three thousand men one can take whatever province he pleases, and through its ports and fleet render himself the most powerful on the sea. This will be very

easy. In conquering one province, the conquest of all is made. The people would revolt immediately . . . In all the islands a great many corsairs live, from whom also we could obtain help for this expedition, as also from the Japanese, who are the mortal enemies of the Chinese. All would gladly take part in it.⁶

Philip was having none of it. There is a note in the margin of the report: 'Reply as to the receipt of this; and that, in what relates to the conquest of China, it is not fitting at the present time to discuss that matter. On the contrary, he must strive for the maintenance of friendship with the Chinese, and must not make any alliance with the pirates hostile to the Chinese, nor give that nation any just cause for indignation against us.'⁷ Sande tried again in another letter in 1579, as did his successor, Diego de Ronquillo, a few years later. But the suggestions seem to have fallen on entirely deaf ears. And once the Manila galleon got going, these proposals seem never to have come up again.

Globalisation was considerably more balanced – economically and politically – between East and West in this first chapter than it was to be in the story's second. That is not to say, Philip II's stated intentions notwithstanding, that relations were very friendly, or that there was not any protracted shoving. The opportunities for trade and access to raw materials did indeed occasion military action and territorial expansion, but it was the Philippines and the rest of Southeast Asia, rather than the much more powerful China and Japan, that bore the brunt of this.

China was larger in territory, economy and population at the end of this period than at the beginning. The twenty-first century is not the West's first encounter with a rising China. Nor is this the first time the West has tried unsuccessfully to fit the entire world into a single overarching conceptual framework. Just as the advance of Western-led globalisation provides the validation for democracy and individual freedom, these values also become the philosophical justification for globalisation.

Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century globalisation was a consequence rather than an explicit objective of Spanish policy and commerce. But Spanish policy nevertheless had a conceptual framework of its own: Catholicism. To the modern eye, attempts at religious conversion can seem tangential and even detrimental to geopolitical advance and commercial gain. But without questioning the sincere beliefs of the adherents, there was a good deal of *realpolitik* in advancing Catholicism. Actions, however one-sided, could be presented as being in the interests of the other party. There was a feeling that shared values and beliefs made it easier to do business.

Converts also undermined existing hierarchies, loyalties and structures in both occupied territories and other countries. The

resulting activities were often considered less than innocent by the governments of China and Japan. Complaints about ‘interference in internal affairs’ are not a uniquely modern phenomenon. The linking of ideology and policy could be a two-edged sword: just as democrats today question *realpolitik* alliances, Spanish clerics were among the most vociferous opponents of forced labour in colonial mines and agricultural estates.

Manila galleon-era Spain had a historical narrative of its own: it had been progressively expanding and unifying for centuries – first the reconquista of the Iberian peninsula and then the conquest of an entire new world. Catholicism went hand-in-glove with this territorial and – once the wealth of the Americas came on stream – financial expansion, a success which both validated Catholicism and was in turn justified by it.

Ultimately, the Spanish narrative, not unlike the current Anglo-American narrative, ran up against the reality that is China. The Sino-Spanish story, and the Silver Way, went into abeyance for about 200 years. It is only in the last decade that the stirrings of a possible rebirth can be witnessed.

VII

Ruta Redux

‘Men’s fortunes are on a wheel, which in its turning suffers not
the same man to prosper for ever.’

– Herodotus

China is ever wont to surprise, but few recent developments seem to have caught observers as much offguard as the country’s current foray into Latin America, including a dramatic proposal for a transcontinental railway traversing both the Amazon and the Andes. But rather than being entirely new, these admittedly still embryonic relationships are reflected in the Sino-Latin American trade of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries.

Latin America, like much of the world, is currently experiencing a ‘pivot to Asia’, or perhaps it’s really a pivot back. One can already see the possible beginnings of a modern Silver Way taking shape. There is, as history echoes down the centuries, considerable emphasis on transportation infrastructure and natural resources. China has been active for several years in mining and agricultural projects from Peru to Brazil. A high-speed rail project in Mexico was derailed due to problems in the tendering process. The Twin Ocean Railroad Connection is a 5000-kilometre high-speed rail project to connect the Atlantic coast of Brazil to the Pacific coast of Peru, through the Amazon and over the Andes. A controversial 50 billion US dollar project has also been tabled to dig a new canal connecting the Pacific and Atlantic via Nicaragua.

The engineering projects in particular are extremely ambitious from the engineering perspective and somewhat dubious from the financial point of view. Few of these projects have escaped criticism on environmental, political or social grounds. Nevertheless, as statements of intent, they speak very loudly.

The parallels between the Silver Way and the earlier Silk Road will surely not have escaped notice. The latter, which flourished for roughly two millennia, entered its final decline with the end of *pax mongolica* and the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks. The Silver Way can in some ways be seen as the successor to the Silk Road. It was the disruption of the Silk Road in the fourteenth and then fifteenth centuries that catalysed the maritime space race discussed in Chapter I, and which led directly to the establishment of the Manila galleon trade.

In both cases, a single commodity acted to bind disparate regions and peoples; the trade routes thus created were both engines of development and conduits for culture, philosophies and religions. Much of Central Asian prosperity owed its existence to the Silk Road trade. In the latter period, the same could be said of Manila and the Philippines. Both New Spain and the Viceroyalty of Peru owed much of their importance to the mines that produced the silver that was in so much demand.

Spanish America became a developed and sophisticated place, with cities, universities, printing presses, writers, artists and other elements of high civilisation – all a century or two before Harvard or New York gained much traction. Spanish America was a product of the High Renaissance; the Renaissance was well over before English North America started to get going.

It was not only silk that travelled along the Silk Road: religions (Buddhism, Manichaeism, Christianity), and technology (e.g. paper-making) did, too. As we have seen, culture and religion similarly travelled over the Silver Way.

It was not just nostalgia that led Chinese President Xi Jinping to evoke a new Silk Road in the recent ‘One Belt, One Road’ initiatives, for the term conjures up a period well before the West and US-based multinational institutions began to dominate. Xi made a direct appeal to history in his announcement.¹

The Silk Road provides an attractive paradigm for the arrangement of China’s relations with its neighbours. It evokes a time when China was economically dominant but not hegemonic: Chinese interests were well-defined, but allowed other parties to prosper, as some – notably the Sogdians from what is now Central Asia – did mightily. The Silk Road was a time of shifting, overlapping alliances and hierarchical relationships, when a well-placed gift or granting of a privilege could allow China to keep its place at the centre of the political firmament. There is no need, the paradigm continues, for Western-dominated institutions such as the WTO, the World Bank and the IMF: China and the region will have their own.

The Silk Road – ironically a Western coinage dating from 1877 –

has had good propagandists and has been fixed in popular and political imagination. The Pacific route also has historical validity and the potential to offer China a non-Anglo-American, if not quite non-Western, paradigm for arranging its relations with the countries to its east. The Silk Road went west from China over land. The Silver Way went east by sea. They are nevertheless fundamentally similar.

These global maritime trade routes predated British and then American global dominance. As a paradigm, the Silver Way hearkens back to a time when the world's most important trade link was that between Spanish America and China, and when the West was led – politically and culturally – not by English-speaking countries but by those speaking what are now known as the Romance languages. The thirty-three members of the recently-formed China and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) pointedly do not include the United States and Canada.

Conclusion

If Urdaneta is to globalisation what Columbus is to America, why has he come to be largely forgotten in the English-speaking world? Indeed, the Manila galleon, the silver trade and the role of the Spanish silver peso seem to be largely absent from Anglo-American history texts, except those specialising in the precise period or subject. This particular amnesia can be dated. The 'Indies' trade in general, and silver in particular, remain central to many of the arguments about economics in Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations*, published in 1776. But as the Spanish Empire receded from the scene, and English-speakers found they had other geopolitical and economic priorities, not least the industrial revolution, forgetfulness began to set in.

From the heights of American global dominance, the fork of history that led to the Spanish Empire seemed something of a cul-de-sac, tangentially relevant to further global progress. Two hundred and fifty years of Sino-Spanish trade were relegated – again, in the English-speaking world – to specialist journals whence they have only recently started to re-emerge.

*

‘From that point, my eyes opened and I began to understand that China was not as inaccessible as the Portuguese had led us to believe . . . and that the bad reputation of the Mandarins was more an invention of the Portuguese than based on any reality . . . and that when people went there, they were merely asked where they came from and what they wanted and once this was known, they left to come and go in peace . . .’

— Fr. Domingo de Salazar, Bishop of the Philippines, in a letter to Philip II, 24 June 1590¹

Urdaneta, who was a navigator, understood the importance of maps and charts. They told you where you were, where you had been, where you were going and how to get back. Unless, of course, like Columbus's charts, they didn't. The reality that Columbus found didn't agree with his charts, yet he spent the rest of his life trying to get reality to fit the chart rather than changing the chart to fit reality.

Twenty-first century China is to the prevailing Anglo-American

historical narrative what the Americas were to Columbus's charts. A rising China – one of the world's largest economic powers, with a military able to project force and a political culture that predates the Enlightenment – does not fit the model. It is a world power increasingly willing to go its own way outside the structure of multinational institutions so painstakingly built up since the end of the Second World War. It is no surprise that China can seem bewildering.

China bewildered the Spanish of 450 years ago as well. But they would have at least recognised a China that restricted navigation, wanted and often succeeded in setting the terms of trade and did things in its own way and that was rarely amenable to either persuasion or the use of force – a China, in other words, that expected the rest of the world to accept it on its own terms.

Two and a half centuries of increasing Anglo-American dominance, a trend that only increased in the post-Second World War period, has not just meant political, military and economic pre-eminence; it has also meant the steady encroachment of laws, language, currency, interest rates, philosophy, business practices and general priorities into local prerogatives. What might this narrative predict for a twenty-first century containing a China which has returned to its *status quo ante*?

Even the most optimistic observers now realise that today's resurgent China does not seem content to play the part that this narrative has scripted for it, nor to play a part in any script but one largely of its own writing. The alternatives are not happy ones. Terms emanating from both the Second World War and the Cold War have recently been bandied about in reference to possible future scenarios.

The Silver Way, however, offers a third possibility: globalisation with neither convergence nor major armed conflict, where the two sides integrate but remain apart. This third possibility is not one where one side progresses while the other is held back: rather, the parties are in equilibrium, albeit an unstable one, subject to disruption, changes in relative terms of trade, differing interests and objectives and more than occasional misunderstandings.

It is important to bring early-modern Asia back into the prevailing historical narrative, to update our maps by making them older. Once we do, many of the trends we now consider inevitable seem not to be trends at all. The link between the narrative of the Silver Way and the later Anglo-American narrative is silver, or rather the monetisation and integration of the world's economies via currency and financial markets. The link remains today in the form of the US dollar and the Chinese yuan, both of which are descended from the Spanish peso. If the Sino-American relationship really is the world's most important of

the twenty-first century, then Americans need a conceptual structure that doesn't measure China's rise against an ill-fitting historical yardstick.

The coming mid-century need not look like the turn of the last century, nor, God forbid, like the mid-1900s. It might instead resemble the world's first globalisation at the turn of the seventeenth century: an East and West that have neither converged nor descended into uncomprehending enmity, but rather in precarious balance, simultaneously cooperating and seeking advantage.

Stories are best started at the beginning. This one – the story of our increasingly integrated world – begins in the Pacific around 1565 and not, as conventional wisdom often has it, in the Western Europe of the mid-eighteenth century.

TIMELINE

- 1492 Christopher Columbus lands in the New World
- 1513 Núñez de Balboa crosses the isthmus of Panama to set sight on the Pacific
- 1521 Hernán Cortés conquers Mexico-Tenochtitlán
- 1522 Magellan circumnavigation; Magellan is killed in the Philippines
- 1522 Juan Sebastián de Elcano, of the same expedition, makes first failed attempt to return eastwards
- 1525-1526 Gale de Loaísa expedition to the Spice Islands; Urdaneta is shipwrecked
- 1527-1529 Álvaro de Saavedra is also unable to return eastwards after two attempts.
- 1535 Establishment of the Viceroyalty of New Spain (Nueva España) in Mexico
- 1537-1538 Juan de Grijalva expedition across the Pacific; crew mutinies
- 1542-1543 Pedro de Villalobos expedition; the Philippines named
- 1543 Bernardo de la Torre makes fourth failed attempt to return eastwards
- 1545 Ortiz de Retez makes fifth failed attempt to return eastwards; New Guinea is named
- 1545 Discovery of silver at Potosí
- 1551 F founding of the first university in Mexico (Royal and Pontifical University)
- 1564-1565 Juan de Legazpi / Andrés de Urdaneta expedition to the Philippines
- 1565 Urdaneta discovers the *tornaviaje*
- 1571 Legazpi founds Manila
- 1573 First cargo of Chinese products sails to Mexico
- 1730 milled Spanish dollars produced
- 1776 Adam Smith publishes *The Wealth of Nations*
- 1815 Manila galleon (the 'Magallanes') sails from Acapulco

NOTES

Prologue

- 1 Blair & Robertson, vol. 2, available online at <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/13280>.

I

- 1 George Orwell, *As I Please*, 4 February 1944, found at: http://orwell.ru/library/articles/As_I_Please/english/eaip_01.
- 2 Authors' translation of 'Documentos relativos al descubrimiento de las islas del Poniente; Archivo General de Indias, PATRONATO, 23, R.12' in the *Archivos Españoles* and can be found here: http://pares.mcu.es/ParesBusquedas/servlets/ControlServlet?accion=4&txt_accion_origen=2&txt_id_desc_ud=121750.
- 3 Authors' translation; original may be found at: https://archive.org/stream/colecciondocument02seririch/colecciondocument02seririch_djvu.txt.
- 4 Blair & Robertson, vol. 2
- 5 Blair & Robertson, vol. 3, available at <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/13616>.
- 6 Ibid.

II

- 1 Authors' translation; original may be found at: <https://www.upf.edu/asia/projectes/che/s16/felipe.htm>.
- 2 Manel Ollé, *La invención de China: Percepciones y estrategias filipinas respecto a China durante el siglo XVI*, Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden, 2000.
- 3 Blair & Robertson, vol. 3.
- 4 Benito Legarda, Jr., 'Two and a Half Centuries of the Galleon Trade', *Philippine Studies* vol. 3, no. 4, 1955.
- 5 *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*, Antonio de Morga; Mexico, 1609 from Blair & Robertson, vol. 16. *Sucesos* was also issued by Blair & Robertson separately, The Arthur H Clark Company, 1907, and is available on Gutenberg.org.
- 6 The term used for Chinese, especially merchants; it might derive from the Hokkien *seng-li* (生理).
- 7 Blair & Robertson, vol. 7. Available at <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/13701>.
- 8 Blair & Robertson, vol. 29. Available at <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/38748>.
- 9 This material is covered in several sources, but a particularly complete account is in 'The History of the Manila Galleon Trade' by Catherine Lugar, in *Archaeological Report of The Recovery of The Manila Galleon Nuestra Señora de la Concepción, Pacific Sea Resources*, 1990, p. 31.
- 10 Benito Legarda, Jr., op. cit.
- 11 Efreñ B. Isorean, 'Maritime Disasters in Spanish Philippines: The Manila-Acapulco

- Galleons, 1565-1815', *International Journal of Asia Pacific Studies: IJAPS*, vol. 11, no. 1, 53-83, 2015.
- 12 Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Careri (see Bibliography). These passages are from the Churchill 1732, edition vol. 4 pp. 468.
- 13 Ibid, pp. 468.

III

- 1 Authors' translation. Original can be found here <http://shemer.mslib.huji.ac.il/lib/W/ebooks/001531300.pdf>.
- 2 Careri, op. Cit. p.479.
- 3 Careri, op. Cit. p.480.
- 4 Alexander von Humboldt, *Political Essay on the Kingdom of New Spain*, 1811.
- 5 *Informatory memorial addressed to the king*. Juan Grau y Monfalcon; Madrid, 1637, in Blair & Robertson, vol. 27.
- 6 Lugar, pp. 18, 20.
- 7 Cinta Krahe, Chinese Porcelain in Habsburg Spain, Centro de Estudios Europa Hispánica, 2016, pp 276-77 and Natale Zappia, 'Porcelain and Cocoa: The Pacific Rim and the Early Modern World Economy' in 'Commodities in World History, 1450-1950': a Project of the UCSC Center for World History, <http://cwh.ucsc.edu/commodities.html>.
- 8 Shirley Ganse, *Chinese Porcelain: An Export to the World*, Joint Publishing, 2008, pp. 80-1.
- 9 Blair & Robertson, vol. 27. Available at <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/26004>.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Alexander von Humboldt, op. cit.
- 13 This is related in several places, including Homer H. Dubs and Robert S. Smith, 'Chinese in Mexico City in 1635', *The Far Eastern Quarterly*, vol. 1, no. 4 (August 1942), pp. 387-9.
- 14 Thomas Gage, *The English-American: A New Survey of the West Indies*, 1648, pp. 84-5 in the RoutledgeCurzon edition (see Bibliography for details).
- 15 Blair & Robertson, vol. 2.

IV

- 1 Blair & Robertson, vol. 2.
- 2 *The Encomienda in New Spain: The Beginning of Spanish Mexico* by Lesley Byrd Simpson, p 226-7; an 1881 edition can be found here <https://archive.org/details/donfrayjuandezu00icazgoog>.
- 3 Bernardo de Balbuena, *La Grandeza Mexicana* [The Grandeur of Mexico City], 1604. A transcription may be found online <http://www.ellibrototal.com/ltotal/ficha.jsp?idLibro=2732>
- 4 Gage, op. cit. p.84.
- 5 Ibid, p. 85.
- 6 The Spanish translates loosely to 'History of the most notable things, rites and customs of the great kingdom of China'.
- 7 By comparison, this was three-quarters of a century after the first books were printed in Mexico, yet still three decades before the first book was published in what is now the United States (*The Whole Booke of Psalmes Faithfully, Translated into English Metre*, published in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1640).
- 8 "Sátira filosófica" by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, published in *Inundación castálida* (Madrid, 1689). Authors' translation.

- 9 Slack, 'Sinifying New Spain', p. 8–9, 12–13.
- 10 Bernardo de Balbuena, op. cit.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Careri, op. cit. p.405.
- 13 The Spanish translates loosely to 'Rich mirror of the clear heart'.
- 14 Matthew Y. Chen, 'Unsung Trailblazers of China-West Cultural Encounter', found at: <http://personal.vu.nl/p.j.peverelli/Chen.html>

V

- 1 Adam Smith, *An Inquiry Into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. Available from Gutenberg.org.
- 2 Blair & Robertson, vol. 3.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Dennis O. Flynn & Arturo Giráldez, 'Born with a "Silver Spoon": The Origin of World Trade in 1571', *Journal of World History*, vol. 6, no. 2, 1995, University of Hawai'i Press.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 The coat of arms can be found online: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Escudo_otorgado_por_Carlos_V,_dada_en_Ulma_el_28_de_enero_de_1547.JPG.
- 7 Blair & Robertson, vol. 22. Available at <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/16297>.
- 8 'Silver Spoon', op. cit.
- 9 The coat of arms can be found online: http://www.eldiario.net/noticias/2015/2015_11/nt151110/nuevoshorizontes.php?n=10&los-blasones-de-potosi-de-antanio.
- 10 Hugh Thomas, *World Without End: The Global Empire of Philip II*, Penguin, 2014.
- 11 Ken Pomeranz & Bin Wong, 'The Silver Trade, Part 1', found at: http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/chinawh/web/s5/s5_4.html
- 12 Charles Ralph Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan: 1549-1650*, University of California Press, 1951, p. 426; also in 'Plata es Sangre'.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 'Silver Spoon', p. 207.
- 15 *Wealth of Nations*, op. cit.
- 16 Timothy Brook, 'Vermeer's Hat: The Seventeenth Century and the Dawn of the Global World', Bloomsbury, 2008, pp. 176–7.
- 17 Flynn & Giraldez, 'Cycles of Silver, Globalization as historical process', *World Economics*, vol. 3, no. 2, April–June, 2002.
- 18 *Metals, Monies, and Markets in Early Modern Societies: East Asian and Global Perspectives Monies, Markets, and Finance in China and East Asia*, vol. 1, Thomas Hirzel, Nanny Kim (eds.), LIT Verlag Münster, 2008.

VI

- 1 'Cycles of Silver', op. cit.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Manel Ollé, 'Interacción y conflicto en el paríán de Manila', *Illes I Imperis*, 2008: Num. 10/11.
- 4 *Wealth of Nations*, op. cit.
- 5 Geoffrey Parker, 'The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500-1800', Cambridge University Press, 1966, p. 132.
- 6 Blair & Robertson, vol. 4.
- 7 Ibid.

VII

- 1 'History, over the past millennia,' said Xi, 'has witnessed ancient civilisations appear and thrive along the Yellow and Yangtze Rivers, the Indus, the Ganges, the Euphrates and the Tigris River, as well as in Southeast Asia, each adding its own splendour to the progress of human civilisation. Today, Asia has proudly maintained its distinct diversity and still nurtures all the civilisations, ethnic groups and religions in this big Asian family.' From the 'Towards a Community of Common Destiny and A New Future for Asia' keynote speech by Xi Jinping at the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference 2015.

Conclusion

- 1 Blair & Robertson, vol. 7.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The list of books that follows is not meant to be complete, but includes primary sources used by the authors as references. While many works are recompiled in different editions, original resources are listed.

- Balbuena, Bernardo, *La Grandeza Mexicana (The Grandeur of Mexico City)*, 1604, <http://www.elibrototal.com/ltotal/ficha.jsp?idLibro=2732>.
- Boxer, Charles Ralph, 'Plata Es Sangre: Sidelights on the Drain of Spanish-American Silver in the Far East, 1550–1700', *Philippine Studies*, vol. 18, no. 3, 1970.
- , *The Christian Century in Japan: 1549-1650*, University of California Press, 1951, pp. 426.
- Brook, Timothy, 'Vermeer's Hat: The Seventeenth Century and the Dawn of the Global World', Bloomsbury, 2008, pp. 176–7.
- Careri, Giovanni Francesco Gemelli, *Giro del Mondo, A Collection of Voyages and Travels: Some Now First Printed from Original Manuscripts* by Awnsham Churchill and John Churchill, vol. 4, 1732, pp. 468.
- Flynn and Giráldez, Dennis O., Arturo, 'Born with a "Silver Spoon": The Origin of World Trade in 1571', *Journal of World History*, vol. 6, no. 2, University of Hawai'i Press, 1995.
- Gage, Thomas, *The English-American: A New Survey of the West Indies*, 1648.
- Legarda. Jr., Benito, 'Two and a Half Centuries of the Galleon Trade', *Philippine Studies*, vol. 3, no. 4, 1955. Lugar, Catherine, 'The History of the Manila Galleon Trade', *Archaeological Report of The Recovery of The Manila Galleon Nuestra Señora de la Concepción*, Pacific Sea Resources, 1990.

Secondary Sources and Further Reading

Secondary sources can be divided into four broad categories: those that cover the Manila galleon; survey works on the period that discuss globalisation; those that deal with specialised matters such as migration and culture; and those that cover silver. Of course, because the issue cuts across so many themes and countries, a great many works intersect with the issues here.

Manila Galleon and Trade

La empresa de China: de la Armada Invencible al Galeón de Manila, Manel Ollé, El Acantilado, Barcelona, 2002.

La ruta española a China, Carlos Martínez Shaw & Marina Alfonso Mola (eds.), El Viso, Madrid, 2007.

Les Philippines et le Pacifique des Ibériques (XVIe, XVIIe, XVIIIe siècles), Pierre Chaunu, SEVPEN, 2 vols., 1960 & 1966.

‘Mexico, Peru, and the Manila Galleon’, William Lytle Schurz, *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, vol. 1, no. 4, November 1918.

‘Silk and Silver: Macau, Manila and Trade in the China Seas in the Sixteenth Century’, John Villiers, *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. 20, 1980.

The Manila Galleon, William Lytle Schurz, Historical Conservation Society, 1939; E.P. Dutton & Co., 1959.

The Spanish Lake, O.H.K. Spate, Australia National University Press, 1979.

Globalisation

ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age, Andre Gunder Frank, University of California Press, 1998.

The Age of Trade: The Manila Galleons and the Dawn of the Global Economy, Arturo Giráldez, Rowman & Littlefield, 2015.

The Eagle and the Dragon: Globalization and European Dreams of Conquest in China and America in the Sixteenth Century, Serge Gruzinski, Polity Press, 2014.

The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy, Kenneth Pomeranz, Princeton University Press, 2000.

1493: Uncovering the New World Columbus Created, Charles C. Mann, Alfred A. Knopf, 2011. Migration, Culture, General History, etc.

- ‘Asia llega a América. Migración e influencia cultural asiática en Nueva España (1565–1815)’, Rubén Carrillo, *Asiadémica*: no. 3, January 2014.
- Descubrimientos españoles en el Mar del Sur*, Amancio Landín Carrasco et al., 3 vols., Editorial Naval, Madrid, 1992.
- ‘Orientalizing New Spain: Perspectives of Asian Influence in Colonial Mexico’, Edward R. Slack, delivered at Transpacific & Transoceanic Exchanges, Brown University, December 2010, <https://www.brown.edu/conference/asia-pacific/sites/brown.edu.Conference.Asia-Pacific/files/apma-Slack.doc>.
- ‘Sinifying New Spain: Cathay’s Influence on Colonial Mexico via the Nao de China’ by Edward R. Slack, Jr., in *The Chinese in Latin America and the Caribbean*, ed. Walton Look Lai, Chee Beng Tan, Brill, 2010.
- The Great Ship From Amacon: Annals of Macao and the Old Japan Trade, 1555–1640*, Charles Ralph Boxer, Centro de Estudios Históricos Ultramarinos, 1959.

Silver

- ‘Born with a “Silver Spoon”: The Origin of World Trade in 1571’, Dennis O. Flynn & Arturo Giráldez, *Journal of World History*, vol. 6, no. 2, 1995, University of Hawai’i Press.
- ‘Cycles of Silver, Globalization as historical process’, Dennis O. Flynn & Arturo Giráldez, *World Economics*, vol. 3, no. 2, April–June 2002.
- Fountain of Fortune: Money and Monetary Policy in China, 1000–1700*, Richard von Glahn, University of California Press, 1996.
- ‘Silk for Silver: Manila–Macao Trade in the 17th Century’, Dennis O. Flynn & Arturo Giráldez, *Philippine Studies*, vol. 44, no. 1, 1996.
- ‘The inflow of American silver into China from the late Ming to the mid-Ch’ing Period’, Chuan Hang-sheng, *Journal of the Institute of Chinese Studies of the Chinese University of Hong Kong*, vol. 2, 1969.

ILLUSTRATIONS

All illustrations are of items in Juan José Morales's personal collection except where indicated below:

España Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte. Archivo General de Indias. Patronato, 23, R.12

España Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte. Archivo General de Indias. Patronato, 1, N.6, R.1

John Carter Brown Library at Brown University

Tom Christensen, from *1616: The World in Motion*, Counterpoint Press, 2012

Trustees of the Boston Public Library

Tom Christensen, from *1616: The World in Motion*, Counterpoint Press, 2012

Heritage Auctions

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would (jointly) like to thank Germán Muñoz, erstwhile president of the Mexican Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong for his support of all IberoAmerican cultural and intellectual activities in Hong Kong, and for his enthusiasm for the Silver Way concept. They would also like to thank Kerry Brown, Manel Ollé, Salvatore Babones and Nicholas Gordon for taking the time to read the work while it was in manuscript form, and likewise Imogen Liu of Penguin China for her many valuable editorial comments and suggestions; James Pach of *The Diplomat*, who published one of the first articles on this subject on the 450th anniversary of the *tornaviaje*; and the Boston Public Library, John Carter Brown Library at Brown University, Tom Christensen and Heritage Auctions for their gracious permission to use illustrations.

Juan José Morales would like to extend his personal thanks to Jonathan Wattis of Wattis Fine Arts and the Philippine Map Collectors Society, and César GuillénNuñez of the Matteo Ricci Institute of Macao, who introduced him to this subject twenty years ago. He would also like to thank Noemí Espinosa Fernández of the Hispanic Society of America in New York and León Gómez Rivas of Universidad Europea de Madrid, both of whom assisted with the bibliography.

A Billion Voices

DAVID MOSER

China's Search for a Common Language

Mandarin, Guoyu or Putonghua? 'Chinese' is a language known by many names, and China is a country home to many languages. Since the turn of the twentieth century linguists and politicians have been on a mission to create a common language for China. From the radical intellectuals of the May Fourth Movement, to leaders such as Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Zedong, all fought linguistic wars to push the boundaries of language reform. Now, Internet users take the Chinese language in new and unpredictable directions. David Moser tells the remarkable story of China's language unification agenda and its controversial relationship with modern politics, challenging our conceptions of what it means to speak and be Chinese.

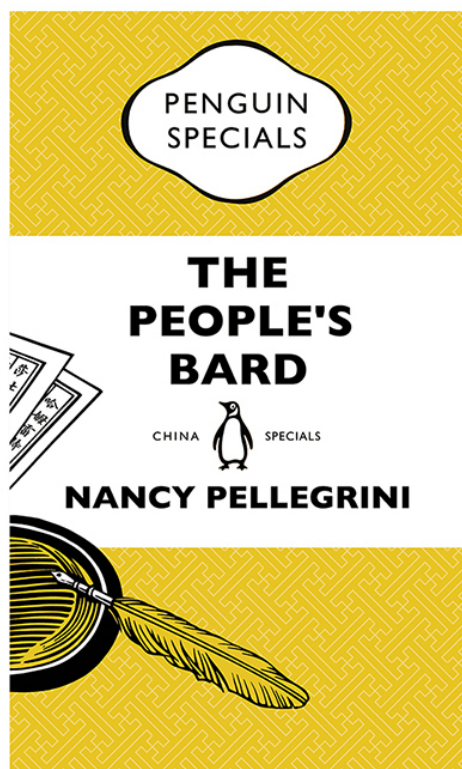
David Moser is a scholar of linguistics and currently serves as Academic Director of CET Chinese Studies at Beijing Capital Normal University. He has taught courses in Translation Theory and Psycholinguistics, and is an active commentator on Chinese media in both Chinese and English.

'Could it be true that "Chinese" is many languages, in fact? That they differ from one another as much as English, French, and German do? That "Mandarin" is a fairly recent invention? That Chinese people have disagreed, sometimes heatedly, about what the features and uses of Mandarin should be? This witty little book shows that all of this is so. A banquet of history and ethnography is salted with nuance that the author has drawn from several years' work with Central Chinese Television.'
Perry Link, author of An Anatomy of Chinese: Rhythm, Metaphor, Politics

'If you want to know what the language situation of China is on the ground and in the trenches, and you only have time to read one book, this is it. A veritable tour de force, in just a little over a hundred pages, David Moser has filled this brilliant volume with linguistic, political, historical, and cultural data that are both reliable and enlightening. Written with captivating wit and exacting expertise, *A Billion Voices* is a masterpiece of clear thinking and incisive exposition.'

Victor H. Mair, American sinologist, professor of Chinese language and literature at the University of Pennsylvania and author of The Columbia History of Chinese Literature

Also available from
Penguin Specials



Read on for the first chapter...

Prologue

A Hunger in the Audience

China's turbulent twentieth century saw dynastic collapse, foreign invasion, civil war, widespread hunger and political turmoil. In the 1900s, the long-shuttered empire was taking its first shaky steps toward international modernity, only to close off again during the 1960s. Then, about a decade later, the doors were flung open once again and China exploded on to the global scene.

Given the country's practical concerns about economic development, it is surprising that anyone's thoughts strayed to foreign literature, but, throughout the modern era, Shakespeare was a symbol of a nation regaining its rightful place. He was a political wedge in the 1920s, and a figure of hope during World War Two; in the 1980s, he was the cultural pinnacle of all that had been denied and renounced for so long.

As for the Bard today, opinions are divided. Touring companies keep bringing Shakespeare into China, and Chinese academics, politicians and directors increasingly take their own form of Shakespeare out. In 2016, the Royal Shakespeare Company embarked on both a China tour and a groundbreaking £1.5 million Chinese translation project. However, some are still not satisfied.

'We're very, very far from where I would hope Shakespeare to be, in terms of numbers or quality of productions,' said Zhao Han, a former professor and current dramaturge, who would ideally like to see two to three locally produced or 'decent' international productions of Shakespeare every season.¹ Raymond Zhou, a theatre practitioner and columnist for *China Daily*, feels that the 1980s exhilaration may have hurt Shakespeare's overall cause. 'Now everything has been available for thirty years; there's so much choice,' he remarked. 'Everyone knows his name, but few have experienced his greatness the way we did then. Now we just pay lip service.'²

Director Yi Liming calls Shakespeare a concept that only *seems* popular, saying that China has comparatively few productions of only a limited range of plays. This he blames on poor translations. 'Actors

don't like to play Shakespeare; they find the lines difficult to deliver, the characters [confusing] and the translations dated,' he said. 'Translators and scholars are disconnected from the theatre, and they don't know what actors need.'³

But enthusiasm is not entirely absent. University students in China regularly put on Shakespeare plays to practice their English, and foreign touring groups play to what can be enormous crowds. Beijing-based writer, professor and director Joseph Graves has directed countless classic dramas and musical theatre productions, and said that besides musicals, Shakespeare is a better commercial bet than anything else he does.⁴

As the China-Southeast Asia general manager for HarrisonParrott, the agency that tours Globe Theatre productions, Cherie Huang helped present *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Hangzhou Grand Theatre, the venue's first foreign show. 'There was such a hunger in the audience,' Huang recalled of the pre-performance discussion held in the lobby. 'There were 300 people there asking questions. We finally had to hurry them in so they wouldn't miss the show.'⁵

Actor Dan Wilder is a regular fixture of Britain's TNT Theatre company, whose Shakespeare specialists have been making at least semi-annual visits to China for over a decade. He remembers performing *Romeo and Juliet* for 2000 teenage girls who knew the name but not the story. 'When I [Romeo] went to drink the poison, they were calling out not to do it,' he said. 'And when I died and Juliet awoke, there was an audible gasp.'⁶

Paul Stebbings, TNT Theatre founder and director, remembers queues down the street for *Macbeth* in the southern city of Wuhan. 'After the performance, about fifteen people lingered,' he said. 'Very shyly they approached the actors and explained they were the Wuhan Shakespeare society. They read texts together in a group, but had never seen a live Shakespeare play before,' he continued. 'They were so excited to see the "real thing".'⁷

Some know the name but not the plays; others have read the plays but have never seen them on stage. Some adapt and direct the plays without truly understanding the story, while others have an astounding knowledge of Shakespeare's works and legacy, but are frustrated with the lack of resources needed to learn more. This complex cocktail represents the Shakespearean landscape in China today. This book will examine China's relationship with the Bard through the perspectives of the scholars, teachers and theatre practitioners who know him best.

Shakespeare isn't anyone's birthright in China, as he is in England. He isn't a product of colonial influence, as he is in India. He didn't drift eastward because of similar theatrical or literary conventions, as

he did in Germany and Russia. In China, he was the right playwright at the right time. He became a valuable symbol of all the country wanted to achieve, whether it was modern values or humanistic ideals. Today, the quest continues.

I

Agent of Change

The Early Years

For millennia, China was accessible only to occasional foreign invaders and a handful of overseas dignitaries. As the modern age brought European powers to Asia, it became apparent that continued isolation would doom Chinese society; clearly, China had to know its enemy, and many considered the Western classics to be the fastest route to understanding.

The name William Shakespeare first eased into China's public consciousness in 1839, thanks to Qing dynasty (1644—1912) war hero Lin Zexu. Lin, a strident voice against the opium trade, was dispatched to Hunan and Guangdong provinces to negotiate with the restive British; he even wrote directly to Queen Victoria, praising the virtues of Confucianism and trying to stave off the impending invasion. Despite his best efforts, the first Opium War (1839—42) soon began.

To Lin, this chain of events crystallised how far Qing-era China had fallen. In response, he assembled a team to translate Western books and newspapers, and encouraged the Chinese people to amass knowledge of Western geography, history, politics and technology. Shakespeare's name was soon swept up with other Elizabethan poets in Lin's translation of Hugh Murray's *Encyclopedia of Geography*, which was published in 1839 as *The Annals of Four Continents*. Lin referred to no specific plays; to him, the playwright's value was the legacy he left to history.

Already Shakespeare had a firm hold in Germany and Russia, and the East India Company's mushrooming success brought the Bard into the colonies — sometimes as sailors' on-board entertainment. To Lin, understanding Shakespeare meant understanding the British, who he called 'greedy, tough, alcoholic, yet skilled in handicraft'.¹

The British, it seems, were also skilled in education. As the number

of English and American missionaries entering China increased from a trickle to a steady stream, instructors began teaching enthusiastic students about Shakespeare and other great Western thinkers. ‘There was profound interest in the English language, and English literature in general,’ said director Joseph Graves. ‘These students and professors were working on these plays as a way to improve their English.’²

Meanwhile, the Qing government began sending promising students and scholars abroad. Guo Songtao (1818—1891), the first Qing dynasty minister in Britain, recorded several Shakespeare encounters in his diary, one of which was a ‘review’ of the 1879 Henry Irving performance of *Hamlet* that said ‘Shakespeare’s plays pay more attention to plot structure than showy sensationalism.’³ Another minister, Zeng Jize, attended possibly the same production of *Hamlet*, and also documented the experience.

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, Shakespeare emerged from China’s missionary and foreign concession classrooms into the public eye. First came the name. After people experimented for several decades with phonetic terms such as Shekesibi, Yesibi, Suoshibier and Xiakesibier, Liang Qichao coined the transliteration ‘Shashibiya’ in 1902, and that name is still in use today.⁴

The following year, Shakespeare the Literary Colossus became Shakespeare the Storyteller. An anonymous translator turned Charles and Mary Lamb’s *Tales of Shakespeare* into *Strange Tales from Beyond the Seas*, and chose titles that were intended to best capture audiences’ imaginations. *Two Gentleman of Verona* became ‘Proteus Betrays His Good Friend for the Sake of Gratifying His Lust’, *The Merchant of Venice* was ‘Antonio Borrows Money by Agreeing to Have His Flesh Cut [If He Defaults]’ and *Twelfth Night* turned into ‘Olivia Makes a Mistake in Love with the Twin Sister of Sebastian’. These are just a few examples. The preface calls Shakespeare England’s literary giant, and laments the fact that ‘our own contemporary literati . . . have also joined the chorus in his praise without even having had the opportunity to read his work’. and hoped that his efforts could provide some remedy.⁵

Lin Shu (1852-1924)

The groundbreaking translator of *Tales of Shakespeare* never had a historical legacy, but his successor certainly did. Born in today’s Fuzhou, Fujian province, Lin Shu studied Chinese poetry and classical literature from childhood, and became a teacher after his father died. At that time it was *de riguer* for educated young men to sit for the imperial examinations and become civil servants. Lin passed the

provincial examinations, but his multiple national-level attempts were unsuccessful.⁶ (The respected literary position he nevertheless holds indicates the difficulty of these exams, and explains why so many classical writers set their protagonists on the harrowing narrative arc of ‘pass the imperial examination, win the high-born girl’).

With his morale at an all-time low, Lin’s despondency only deepened when his beloved wife died. To distract him, a friend suggested that he collaborate with French-speaking Wang Shouchang to translate — or rather, adapt — *La Dame aux Camillas* into Chinese. Lin eventually translated more than 180 works of literature from eleven countries, all without knowing a single foreign language.

In 1904, Lin worked with English-speaker Wei Yi, who summarised the Lambs’ *Tales of Shakespeare* into vernacular Chinese, which Lin then transformed into classical Chinese. This was not unusual at the time. In his book *Chinese Shakespeares: Two Centuries of Cultural Exchange*, Alexander C.Y. Huang claims that writers such as Ezra Pound, Bertolt Brecht, Judith Gautier and William Carlos Williams also engaged in collaborative translation, either by teaming up with foreign language speakers or by using materials written in their own tongues.⁷

Lin saw Shakespeare as just one in a canon of literary titans, and saw himself as an entertainer, not an instructor. Absorbing a foreign culture via travel or study was not part of his programme. He finished twenty tales in twenty days, categorising his resultant book, *English Poet: Reciting From Afar on Joyous Occasions*, as ‘stories of gods and spirits,’ to appeal to the Chinese audience.

In 1916, he joined translator Chen Jialin to produce *Richard II* and *Henry IV, parts I and II*; *Henry V* was published posthumously in 1924. All these works were published in classical Chinese, and all with Lin’s Confucian slant. The histories were never as popular, but the editorial board of *Short Story* magazine was rejecting works featuring ghosts and demons, now seen as holdouts of feudalism. Fictional works about national histories were suddenly in demand.⁸

With his broad plot outlines that were perfect for staging and casual reading, Lin’s work was enormously influential, resulting in three editions and eleven reprints. These remained well-thumbed even after the complete translations were available.⁹ Cao Yu (1910–1996), China’s most formidable modern playwright, credited Lin’s translation of *Tales* for cultivating his love of Shakespeare. As soon as he could read English, Cao said, he reached for Shakespeare, since ‘Lin’s translation of Shakespeare’s fantasy world was so fresh in my young mind.’¹⁰

Noted poet and playwright Guo Moruo (1892-1978) even preferred Lin’s versions to actual Shakespeare, saying, ‘I read *The Tempest*,

Hamlet and *Romeo and Juliet* in the original when I grew up, but it seemed to me that Lin's way of telling these stories as fairy tales was more appealing.'¹¹

Although Lin's main concern was literature and poetry, a violent societal tide was rising. Few nations have experienced the trauma and turbulence endured by modern China. After the mid-nineteenth century Opium Wars came the Boxer Rebellion and the Eight-Nation Alliance, which occupied Peking in 1900. The Qing dynasty collapsed about a decade later, and the Warlord Era lasted from 1916 to 1928, overlapping with the Chinese Civil War, which raged intermittently from 1927 to 1949.

Meanwhile, China sent nearly 100 000 labourers to aid Europe in World War One. The long-cloistered country wanted to take its first steps into the global arena and, more specifically, have its Qingdao concessions returned by Germany. Instead, the Chinese found themselves marginalised in the Treaty of Versailles, and discovered that their coveted land had been given via secret agreement to Japan. This mortifying turn of events led to the May Fourth Movement, and its effects still reverberate.

As history exploded around them, many Chinese people felt that something was indeed rotten in the state of Denmark, and believed that adopting Western thought, morals and values was the surest way to build up defences . . . against the West. Shakespeare became a key figure in this struggle.

'May Fourth opened up China to Western influence, with this wealth of cultural information and towering figures,' said columnist Raymond Zhou. 'Even in translation, you can still feel intuitively the scale, the grandeur of Shakespeare's works; it comes on like a hurricane.'¹² Others saw the Bard as a symbol of Western accomplishments and forward thinking, lauding him as a hero before ever opening his books. 'There was this vague notion that Shakespeare was the West's greatest writer,' said Cheng Zhaoxiang, English professor at Peking University.¹³

Like other conservatives and classical scholars, Lin clung to traditions being swallowed up by the nascent reform movement. He tried to co-opt Shakespeare for his own cause, writing in his introduction to *English Poet*:

It is always said that the reason Europeans are superior to us is that . . . we prefer the old to the new, and like talking about gods and spirits. As a result, our nation has . . . deteriorated day by day . . . If Westerners are really civilised, they should have already burnt [Shakespeare's] works and banned them . . . Nobody reproaches him for his antiquated thoughts, nor is anyone angry at his talking about gods and spirits. Why is this?¹⁴

Lin argued that since the Bard's work — the very measure of an

advanced society — spun tales of the supernatural, so could supposedly backward China, without opprobrium.

Soon others also realised that Shakespeare's malleable texts could suit any argument, while his historical gravitas provided cover. Intellectuals sent abroad to learn science and technology returned with literary and philosophical ideals, and Shakespeare became the answer to any question.

Lu Xun (1881-1936)

Another strong voice in early Shakespeare discussions came from Lu Xun, one of China's sharpest and most influential modern writers. Born Zhou Shuren in Shaoxing, Zhejiang province, Lu Xun's once-powerful family collapsed after his grandfather was jailed for attempted bribery of an imperial examination official, and his bedridden father died while Lu was still a teenager. However, he still obtained a solid foundation in the classics and eventually went to study medicine in Tokyo. When the Russo-Japanese War broke out, fought partly on disputed territory in northern China, he shifted his attention from healing the body to healing the soul, and became a prolific cross-genre writer using both classical and vernacular Chinese.

Lu understood the power of words, calling Shakespeare, Dante, Milton, Goethe, Byron, Shelley and Pushkin 'fighters in the spiritual realm'.¹⁵ Besides being a passionate advocate of using *baihua* (vernacular Chinese), he believed that China was in desperate need of a 'Chinese Shakespeare' to heal its moral ills, and felt that Shakespeare was an essential component of any well-rounded education.¹⁶

Scholars also used Shakespeare to support their varied arguments. Lu employed *Julius Caesar* to make disturbing observations about the masses; citing Marc Antony manipulating the crowd, the Nietzsche fan declared that 'only with the emergence of a superman can we expect a world at peace', and that 'right or wrong cannot be perceived by the people', nor could 'political affairs . . . be revealed to them'.¹⁷ For his part, reformer Yan Fu celebrated perceived Western values by pointing out the way Antony used Western-style reasoning to reach his listeners: 'Every step of the way he employs tactics which drive his auditors to anger and outrage. This clearly shows the power of logic.'¹⁸

While Qing emperors reinforced Confucianism to keep order, others blamed the ancient codes for China's rapid political and military decline. But an increasing number felt that the horrors of World War One invalidated so-called Western values, and that maybe Chinese problems needed Chinese solutions. Enter the New Culture Movement,

which extended from the mid-1910s to the mid-1920s, and sought to re-evaluate Confucian texts and gender issues, adopt vernacular literature and assess China's place in the global order.

Modern Values for a Modern China

At its heart, the New Culture Movement was a war of words: classical versus vernacular language. At first glance, this seems an obvious choice, given that China was trying to further national literacy. However, for more than a millennium, Chinese men had been judged on their knowledge of Chinese classics. Most heroes of traditional dramas are lowborn men en route to taking the national-level imperial examination; passing — an almost mythological event — generates both the coveted civil servant post and the happy ending. Literary ability was a virtue, denoting personal accomplishment and ensuring a better life.¹⁹

To hasten modern learning, the government eliminated the exam in 1905, no doubt causing millions of scholars to wonder whether intimate knowledge of the Confucian analects and Chinese classical poetry was applicable to other fields. But as the reform movement swelled, information needed dissemination, and *baihua* was the language of the people. Shanghai became a publishing powerhouse, and organisations such as the Commercial Press set up repositories that served as modern libraries, removing Chinese classics and stocking the shelves with works of foreign literature, science and world events.

One crucial bottleneck in national literacy and modernity was the lack of gender equality. Prior to the dynastic collapse, progressive Qing scholars had been criticising the brutal traditions of forced marriage, polygamy and foot-binding, but women nevertheless stayed locked in their homes. In *Shakespeare in China: A Comparative Study of Two Traditions and Cultures*, author Xiaoyang Zhang claims that gardens featured prominently in classical literature because they were the only places a cloistered noblewoman could feel free.²⁰ Confucian values demanded that women follow three obediences (father, husband and sons), and four virtues (morality, proper speech, modesty and diligence). Married women received an additional four virtues (taking care of their parents-in-law, serving their husbands, maintaining good relationships with sisters-in-law and getting on with neighbours).²¹ Widows, even young ones, could not remarry. 'Women [who were pressured to remarry] by their parents, [and] either committed suicide or disfigured themselves by physical mutilation . . . were singled out for praise . . . Later emperors promoted the chastity

cult by publicly honoring chaste widows with special arches built in their honor.’²²

Clearly, this society sprinting toward modernity had to contend with a large part of its population being illiterate and — for those with bound feet — possessing a limited ability to work. Even once-progressive women’s issues about raising healthy children and keeping a harmonious home now seemed old-fashioned. Reformers advocated ‘free love’, which gave a woman the right to chose her own husband and be his only wife, as well as the right to divorce and the right for widows to remarry.²³

Meanwhile, *xiqu* (Chinese opera) was giving way to *huaju* (Western-style spoken drama), and Shakespearean culture was undergoing a review. Tian Han, considered one of the inventors of Chinese modern drama, produced the first complete translation of a Shakespeare play, *Hamlet*, between 1921 and 1922, setting the stage for true dramatic interpretations based on text, not tale.²⁴

Tian Han (1898—1968)

Best known for penning the poem ‘March of the Volunteers’, which later became China’s national anthem, Tian Han was born in 1898 in Changsha county, Hunan province. As a teenager he composed opera libretti, then studied in Japan from 1916 to 1922. Tian became enamoured of nineteenth century intellectuals who were devoted to art for art’s sake; he soon abandoned his study of politics to devote more time to literature, movies and theatre — so much so that his eyesight was failing from the dim light.²⁵ But as much as he loved Byron, Nietzsche and Whitman, he also felt that absorbing foreign values would help advance his homeland, by ‘beating the devil at his own game.’²⁶

For his rendition of *Hamlet*, Tian used a Japanese translation and drew from classical Chinese poetry to capture Shakespeare’s language, which means that his finished product is considered evocative but difficult to perform. Even so, Tian’s work ushered in a new era of Shakespeare translation.

Tian followed *Hamlet* with his 1923—24 *Romeo and Juliet*, which he produced upon returning home, determined to reinvent China for modern times.²⁷ Just in time, too, since the battle was still raging. Lu Xun’s rapier pen mocked the *Contemporary Review*’s self-described English experts for not producing a translation of Shakespeare’s complete works: ‘Even the introduction of the “long-since renowned” plays of Shakespeare has to rely on Tian Han, a non-specialist in English.’²⁸

In his essay *Hamlet and Returned Students*, Review member Xu Zhimo's response probably won him few fans:

We have been in Great Britain and Shakespeare was an Englishman who wrote in English, and we understand his language, and have studied his plays at college . . . Those of you who have never been abroad and cannot read Shakespeare's original text have no right to contradict us. You should only turn your attention to us and listen to what we say . . . You can't do without us, whether you believe it or not.²⁹

Fellow Review member Chen Xiying was even more succinct: 'Anyone who does not love Shakespeare is a fool.'³⁰

Among scholars, Shakespeare grew steadily in prominence. In 1924, the United States forgave the indemnity they had demanded for helping to suppress the Boxer Rebellion, provided that China put the money toward education. Hu Shi, progressive writer and academic educated abroad, chaired the Translation Division of the China Educational and Cultural Foundation, which formed a committee of five members dedicated to translating Shakespeare's complete works into vernacular Chinese. Unfortunately, after Xu Zhimo died in a plane crash, the group abandoned the project.

Or almost abandoned, rather, since another member chose to continue alone. Liang Shiqiu was the first Chinese-born scholar to translate Shakespeare's complete works. A few years later, translator Zhu Shenghao, driven by patriotism and an idolatry of Shakespeare that eventually cost him his life, completed thirty-one and a half plays before his death at age 32.

For all their historical contributions, writers like Lin Shu and Tian Han were simply intellectuals who translated Western classics, as was the fashion of the time. By contrast, Liang Shiqiu and Zhu Shenghao, working in the 1930s and 1940s, devoted their lives to translating Shakespeare's complete works. A decade later, translators Bian Zhilin and Sun Dayu made revolutionary advances by using sound units and pacing to mimic iambic pentameter. Their efforts allowed Fang Ping to produce a complete works in verse form in the year 2000. These scholars, in particular Liang and Zhu, are viewed as true Shakespeare translators, and their stories will be covered in Chapter Three.

Early Performances

But the Chinese weren't waiting for full translations to stage Shakespeare. In 1902, students at the prestigious Anglican St. John's College in Shanghai presented an English-language version of *The Merchant of Venice*, albeit focusing on language study rather than artistic interpretation. Besides, the era of *huaju* had not yet begun. Early performances were done in *xiqu*, a 1000-year-old art form that

combines singing, dancing, martial arts, acrobatics, highly stylised movements and vocal recitations (Peking opera is the most famous form today). Much like in Shakespeare's time, audiences demanded nearly a play a day, leaving little time for rehearsal, let alone memorisation.³¹ Families often formed their own theatre companies, but until the 1920s, only males were allowed on stage.

In 1913, *xiqu* troupes began staging Shakespeare's works based on Lin Shu's translations of the Lambs' prose summaries, meaning that actors received only plot outlines and improvised the rest. *The Merchant of Venice* is a sentimental favourite in China; today, Portia's courtroom speech is included in many middle school textbooks. Some translated titles include *A Pound of Flesh* (*Yi bang rou*), *Securing a Loan by Flesh-Cutting* (*Jiezhai ge rou*) and *The Woman Attorney* (*Nu lushi*).³² A newspaper ad reported:

The Woman Attorney is one of Shakespeare's famous plays. It involves cutting off a piece of one's own flesh [sic] to borrow money while the heroine, while a woman, still becomes a lawyer. Excellent literary style; a wonderful story full of fun.³³

The improvisational dramatic style also included actors delivering heated monologues about current events, which offered striking examples of how theatre could play into politics. In his essay 'What Use Shakespeare? China and Globalization,' Shakespearean scholar Shen Lin reported that 'The [1913 *Merchant*] adaptation departed significantly from the original text. . . into daring lampoons of the abuse of power and perversion of justice common in the land.'³⁴ In reaction to general-turned-president Yuan Shikai, audiences saw a 1916 rendition of *Macbeth* called *The Arch Usurper of the State*. Lead actor Gu Wuwei would step out of character and deliver — to thunderous applause — scathing asides condemning the new leader, who then had Gu arrested and sentenced to death. Mercifully, Yuan's reign was short-lived; he died before the actor's sentence was carried out.

The Rise of Huaju

Twenty or so more performances followed, generally done in *xiqu* or *wenming xi*, which means 'civilised drama', a hybrid art form that transitioned between *xiqu* and *huaju*, though few today could explain the specifics. The elaborate movements of *xiqu*'s one-dimensional characters seemed woefully inadequate for addressing China's social and political malaise. Nevertheless, theatre became the most expedient way for reformers to do just that.

Theatre as an agent of change was nothing new. Reformer and

literary figure Chen Duxiu said ‘. . . only the theatre, through reform, can excite and change the whole society — the deaf can see it and the blind can hear it. There is no better vehicle for social reform than the theatre.’ Chen also recommended the more verbal, Western style, noting the usefulness of characters being able to debate and give speeches.³⁵

However, without a lot of working stage translations, most people had access to Shakespeare only through Lin Shu’s narratives, and his fairy tales didn’t suit the increasingly turbulent society. Dramatists sought to stage the works of Ibsen, Shaw and Chekov, as well as Chinese writers such as Cao Yu and Tian Han. With their direct messages and simple staging, these were serious plays for serious times. Dramatist Xiong Foxi claimed: ‘The reason that Shakespeare’s plays are not suitable for our stage is not because the themes are outdated, but because these plays involve frequent scene changes and come with a long list of *dramatis personae*.’³⁶ But as similar plays crowded the stage, the arts suffered. Even Tian — whose own work was in demand and who dreamed of being ‘China’s Ibsen’³⁷ — championed Shakespeare because he saw too many Ibsen-style works on stage.

While still popular with ad-hoc university groups, at this time, Shakespeare disappeared off the professional stage. However, he remained an academic presence. Scholars who were lauding Ibsen, Shaw and Chekov as the new direction of Chinese theatre were also vying with each other over who could read Shakespeare in the original English. The playwright’s revolutionary functions were suddenly less important than his humanistic ideals and intellectual credibility, and the transliteration Shashibiya slipped in favour of the venerated title Sha Weng, or Old Man Sha.

Portia and the New Chinese Woman

The drive for equality made Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House* a runaway hit — women who left their families to join the revolution were called ‘Nora Warriors’. This also partly explains the fascination with *The Merchant of Venice*. Starting in the 1920s, women could act on stage, receive higher education and even enter the legal profession. In 1920, Peking University took on its first eleven female students; by 1922, the number had jumped to nearly 900.³⁸

The 1927 film *The Woman Lawyer*, like most *Merchant* productions, focused not on religious discrimination but on Portia’s intelligence. Although part of the appeal is the story’s fairy tale elements — for example, the choice of three caskets and the pound of flesh — the

focal point was the smart, sassy symbol of China's ideal woman.

'Portia was a lot like women in Chinese literature,' said Raymond Zhou, adding that the heroine is also the story's only unambiguous character — a strong selling point in China. 'For thousands of years in China, women were property. But in Chinese literature and arts, they had better positions and treatment. In love stories, the woman is always better depicted and a stronger character,' he continued. 'The men are weak in every way.'³⁹

Notes

PROLOGUE

- 1 Zhao Han [former professor, dramaturge], in discussion with the author, 2016.
- 2 Zhou, Raymond [*China Daily* columnist and theatre practitioner], in discussion with the author, 2016.
- 3 Yi Liming [director], in discussion with the author, trans. Zhao Han, 2016.
- 4 Graves, Joseph [director, professor, playwright], in discussion with the author, 2016.
- 5 Huang, Cherie [HarrisonParrott General Manager, China and Southeast Asia], in telephone interview with the author, 2016.
- 6 Wilder, Dan [TNT Theatre actor], in an email interview with the author, 2016.
- 7 Stebbings, Paul [TNT Theatre founder and director], in an email interview with the author, 2016.

I

- 1 Lin Zexu, quoted from Alexander C.Y. Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares: Two Centuries of Global Exchange*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009, pp. 51 and 339.
- 2 Graves, discussion, 2016.
- 3 Guo Songtao, quoted from Meng Xianqiang, *A Historical Survey of Shakespeare in China*, edited by Murray J. Levith, trans. Mason Y. H. Wang. Changchun: The Shakespeare Research Centre of Northeast Normal University, 1996, p. 3.
- 4 Li Ruru, *Shashibiya: Staging Shakespeare in China*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2003, p. 17.
- 5 *Xiewai qitan* [*Strange Tales from Abroad*], quoted from Meng, *Historical Survey*, p. 6.
- 6 'Lin Shu (1852–1924): Chronology of Lin Shu's Life', agonfilosofia.es, http://www.agonfilosofia.es/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=335.
- 7 Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares*, pp. 76–77.
- 8 *Xiaoshuo Yuebao* 7.13 (1961), quoted from Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares*, p. 73.
- 9 Li, *Shashibiya*, p. 16.
- 10 Ibid, p. 16.
- 11 Guo Moruo, quoted from Li, *Shashibiya*, p. 16.
- 12 Zhou, discussion, 2016.
- 13 Cheng Zhaoxiang [Peking University English professor, director of the PKU Institute of World Theatre and Film], in discussion with the author, 2016.
- 14 Lin Shu, quoted from Li, *Shashibiya*, p. 13.
- 15 Lu Xun, quoted from Li, *Shashibiya*, p. 15.
- 16 All translations have been reviewed by Professor Cheng Zhaoxiang of PKU, unless otherwise noted.
- 17 Lu Xun, quoted from Meng, *Historical Survey*, pp. 4–5.

- 18 Yan Fu, quoted from Meng, *Historical Survey*, p. 5.
- 19 Zhang Xiaoyang, *Shakespeare in China: A Comparative Study of Two Traditions and Cultures*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1996, p. 98.
- 20 Ibid, p. 58.
- 21 Ibid, p. 38.
- 22 Kelleher, M. Theresa, 'Confucianism', in Helen Tierney (ed.) *Women's Studies Encyclopedia*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2002, p. 4.
- 23 Hubbard, Joshua Adam, 'New Woman: Femininity and Feminism in the Ladies' Journal 1915–1931', thesis, partial requirement, East Asian Studies, Ohio State University, Columbus: Ohio State University, 2012, pp. 50–51.
- 24 Chen Xiaomei, 'Reflections on the Legacy of Tian Han: "Proletarian Modernism" and its Traditional Roots', *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* (2004), p. 163. NOTE: Hamlet's translation date is of some dispute; Chen and others say 1921, but Li Ruru says that only scenes were published in 1921, and the complete translation was finished in 1922. See Li Ruru 'Hamlet in China: Translation, Interpretation and Performance', <http://www.web.mit.edu/shakespeare/asia/essays/RuruLi.html>, p. 33.
- 25 Ibid, p. 163.
- 26 Ibid, p. 161.
- 27 Ibid, p. 163. This is another disputed date; Chen and others say 1923, while among those in the 1924 camp is Sun Yanna, *Shakespeare in China*, doctoral dissertation, Faculty of Linguistics, Literary and Cultural Studies. Dresden: University of Dresden, 2008, p. 19.
- 28 Lu Xun, quoted from Meng, *Historical Survey*, p. 11.
- 29 *Chenbaofukan* [*Literary Supplement to the (Peking) Morning Gazette*], 21 October 1925, quoted from Meng, *Historical Survey*, p. 13.
- 30 *Chenbaofukan*, 21 October 1925, as quoted from Meng, *Historical Survey*, 13.
- 31 Zhang, *Shakespeare in China*, p. 111.
- 32 Levith, Murray J., *Shakespeare in China*. London: Continuum, 2004, p. 15.
- 33 Li Ruru, 'The Bard in the Middle Kingdom', quoted from Levith, *Shakespeare in China*, p. 15.
- 34 Xi Zua, 'Three Basic Elements of New Drama', quoted from Shen Lin, 'What use Shakespeare? China and globalization', in Dennis Kennedy and Yong Li Lan (eds.) *Shakespeare in Asia: Contemporary Performance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. 219–233.
- 35 Sun, *Shakespeare in China*, p. 135.
- 36 Xiong Foxi, quoted from Huang, *Chinese Shakespeares*, p. 107.
- 37 Chen, 'Tian Han', p. 194.
- 38 Koetse, Manya. 'Gendered Nationalism and May Fourth: China's "New Woman"', manyakoetse.com, 8 December 2008, <http://www.manyakoetse.com/gendered-nationalism-and-may-fourth-chinas-newwoman>.
- 39 Zhou, discussion, 2016.

PENGUIN BOOKS

UK | USA | Canada | Ireland | Australia
India | New Zealand | South Africa | China

Penguin Books is part of the Penguin Random House group of companies
whose addresses can be found at global.penguinrandomhouse.com.



First published by Penguin Group (Australia) 2017

Text copyright © Peter Gordon and Juan José Morales, 2017

The moral right of the authors has been asserted.

All rights reserved. Without limiting the rights under copyright reserved above, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise), without the prior written permission of both the copyright owner and the above publisher of this book.

Cover design by Bi Yabin © Penguin Group (Australia)

penguin.com.au

ISBN: 978-1-76014-371-8



THE BEGINNING

Let the conversation begin...

Follow the Penguin [Twitter](#)

Keep up-to-date with all our stories [YouTube](#)

Pin 'Penguin Books' to your [Pinterest](#)

Like 'Penguin Books' on [Facebook](#)

Find out more about the author and
discover more stories like this at [penguin.com.au](#)